



On the Eve of our Chancellor's Birthday 25 Sep 2025

Three

Brontë

Sisters



Department of English



Dr. M.G.R.
EDUCATIONAL AND RESEARCH INSTITUTE
DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY

University with Graded Autonomy Status

(An ISO 21001 : 2018 Certified Institution)

Periyar E.V.R. High Road, Maduravoyal, Chennai-95. Tamilnadu, India.





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Three Brontë Sisters

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FOREWORD

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The Brontë sisters—Charlotte, Emily, and Anne—were influential 19th-century English writers known for their significant contributions to literature. Born in the early 1800s in Yorkshire, England, they grew up in a challenging environment that shaped their artistic expressions. Their father, Patrick Brontë, encouraged their education and creativity, despite societal constraints on women of their time. The sisters created intricate imaginary worlds, such as Angria and Gondal, which served as the foundation for their later writings.

Out of seven (4 + 1 + 2) of their books, the three books viz., '*Jane Eyre*', '*Wuthering Heights*', and '*The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*' written by Charlotte, Emily, and Anne respectively are very famous. The other four books respectively are: '*Shirley*', '*Villette*', '*The Professor*', and '*Agnes Grey*'.

The three Brontë sisters rank among the major English novelists of the Victorian era. At their time, the sisters' writings were noted for their directness and emotional power including gripping plots, enduring characters



and passionate prose. The 19th century commentators/critics called the books 'coarse' and 'brutal'.

The descriptive nature of these books is briefly given below:

'Jane Eyre'

Charlotte Brontë's best-known work tells the story of Jane Eyre - a spirited, practical young woman who discovers a secret in the home of her employer, Mr Rochester. Moral dilemmas, supernatural scenes, and evocative landscapes are some major characteristics.

'Shirley'

Charlotte's second novel was a perceptive exploration of the industrialising Yorkshire she observed around her. Though set in the Luddite era, many of her characters were inspired by people she knew in her own time, including her sister Emily and best friend Mary Taylor. It provides a powerful analysis of women's experience in a changing Britain.

'Villette'

In Charlotte Brontë's last novel published in her lifetime, follow Lucy Snowe as she navigates her new life in Villette, largely inspired by Charlotte's own time in Brussels. This provides autobiographical anecdotes, descriptive scenes, and the hints at the supernatural for which the author is famous.

'The Professor'

'The Professor' was Charlotte Brontë's first novel, but wasn't published until 1857, after Charlotte's death. The story centres around William Crimsworth, following his unplanned departure from Yorkshire over the Channel to Belgium. It was suggested that Charlotte drew from her own experience of teaching in Brussels when writing the novel.

'Wuthering Heights'

'Wuthering Heights' shocked audiences when first published. But its morally

ambiguous tone, which caused such offence to 19th century critics, is perhaps what continues to entice readers even today. Emily Brontë's passionate tale of two families evokes the turbulent Yorkshire moorland around Haworth. Its nightmarish, Gothic elements and infamous protagonists, Cathy and Heathcliff, have helped it remain a genre-defining classic.

'Agnes Grey'

Anne's first novel reveals the truth of what it was like working as a governess in Victorian England. Influenced by her own experiences, Anne tells the story of Agnes - the youngest daughter of a clergyman, who sets off to prove she can live a life for herself. By exposing the reality of work for the 19th century middle-class woman, 'Agnes Grey' is Anne's first endeavour at championing women's rights.

'The Tenant of Wildfell Hall'

In this book, Anne Brontë lays bare the realities of drunkenness and abuse, recounting her heroine's attempts to escape from a corrupt husband. Set firmly against the protagonist's moralising tone, the novel bravely addresses a dark underside to the privileged society of the time, exploring women's agency within it.

The three sisters published their poetry and novels under male pseudonyms to navigate the patriarchal literary world. Despite facing personal tragedies, including the early deaths of their siblings and their own struggles with health, the Brontës left a lasting legacy. Their works continue to resonate and challenge readers with their depictions of strong, complex female characters and their critique of societal norms.

They penned their novels in the Parsonage - now the *Brontë Parsonage Museum*. The Brontë Parsonage Museum is a writer's house museum maintained by the

Brontë Society in honour of the Brontë sisters - Charlotte, Emily and Anne. The museum is in the former Brontë family home, the parsonage in Haworth, West Yorkshire, England, where the sisters spent most of their lives and wrote their famous novels. The Brontë Society, one of the oldest literary societies in the English-speaking world, is a registered charity. Its members support the preservation of the museum and library collections.

The Book, "**Three Bronte sisters**", published by our Department of English, makes an appreciative attempt to portray the Bronte's family and their contributions to English literature. The book provides a wide coverage of three sisters and their family: Charlette [15 chapters in 114 pages], Emily [Chapters 15 chapters in 98 pages], Anne [10 chapters in 72 pages] and Family [chapters 5 in 44 pages].

Almost each chapter provides the relatively detailed and important web links which would be found very useful by the students and scholars of English literature, especially in the 21st century. Also, the book provides several adaptations - films, silent films, sound films, radio, television, theatre, works inspired by the novel, re-telling, re-working, prequels, spin-offs music - which may be a rare source of inspiration to the readers.

The attempt of our Department of English in bringing out this book, especially the authors, is highly appreciative as well as a rare service to the three Brontë sisters of the Victorian era. I wish that this innovative attempt would encourage other staff members, especially in the Department of English, to initiate some similar efforts in their academic career.

Welcome !

Name	Pictures of Bronte Personage Museum	Pages
Charlotte Bronte		1 > 114
Emily Bronte		115 > 211
Anne Bronte		212 > 288
Family		289 > 330

Charlotte Brontë

S.No	Chapters	Pages
Section I: Life and Background		
011	Charlotte Bronte >>> A Profile Brief details + photo + a Web Link	1
022	Biography after 160 years A challenging/questionable biography	4
033	200 years after her Birth Response generation after generation + A miniature manuscript dated 1830	7
044	Charlotte Brontë (1816-1855) Biography A detailed biography containing some of her books and their reviews + biographies + bibliographies + References + a Web Link	10
Section II: Major Works of Charlotte Brontë		
055	Jane Eyre Containing a brief Profile with some selected photographs + an important Web Link	39
066	Quotes from Jane Eyre Containing a list of selected Quotes on the various themes from Jane Eyre	44
077	Read >>>>>> Jane Eyre An Autography "Jane Eyre" + some photos + Preface and two Web Links to download and/or read the full Novel.	48
088	Full Book Analysis - Jane Eyre A critical analysis + a Web Link to reach several sub-topics	52
099	Shirley A detailed Introduction of the Novel + some photos + a Web Link	55
1010	Villette A detailed Introduction of the Novel + some photos + a Web Link	65
1111	The Professor A brief Introduction + a Web Link	76
Section III: Literary Recognition and Legacy		
1212	Poetry Foundation >>> CB	81

	photos + a Web Link	
1313	A Wish for Wings An article published in 2012 + photos + a Web Link	99
1414	Adaptations of Jane Eyre Some adaptations – films, silent films, sound films, radio, television, theatre, works inspired by the novel, re-telling, re-working, prequels, spin-offs music + photos + a Web Link	102
1515	The Legacy of Charlotte Brontë An article + some photos + a Web Link	112



Emily Brontë

S No.	Chapters	Pages
Section I: Major Work — <i>Wuthering Heights</i>		
0116	<i>Wuthering Heights</i> Containing a Full summary + Chronology + downloadable (book) web pages + Weblinks for 6 Videos & one Audio + 2 pictures	115
0217	<i>Some Special Quotes</i> Containing a list of selected Quotes of her + from her novels/poems + characters from her book.	122
0318	<i>Read >> Wuthering Heights</i> Detailed Profile + Web Page + Photos + Web Page to read/download the Novel + Explanations for some important Quotes from Wuthering Heights	128
Section II: Analysis & Cultural Impact		
0419	<i>Wuthering Heights <: :> A Cult Classic</i> A Critical explanation about the Novel “Wuthering Heights” by an Expert + Two pictures	130
0520	<i>Analysis of “Wuthering Heights”</i> A variety of critical analysis of the Novel by experts like, Angelica Frey, Junhong Tang & others + 7 Web Links + 4 photos	135
0621	<i>Movie Adaptation</i> Two articles about the movie adaptation of the Novel ‘Wuthering Heights’ + their web pages + release date = February 14, 2026: Valentine’s Day + a photo	153
0722	<i>Poetry Foundation >>> EB</i> Historical Introduction + 2 Videos	157
0823	<i>The Enduring Legacy of Emily Brontë</i> Examining the lasting impact of ‘Wuthering Heights’ on literature and popular culture + 3 pictures + An important Web Link from the Web Page “Library Thing” + another 10 important Web Links.	169

Section III: Poetry

09 24	Adaptations of 'Wuthering Heights' Several adaptations, viz, Films, TV Films, Series, Radio, Audio, Opera, Musical Theatre, Graphical Novel, Loose adaptations.	174
10 25	Emily Brontë's Handwritten Poems Rare photos of hand-written pages + Background of the lost poems	180
11 26	The Complete Poems of Emily Brontë A Bibliographical Note + Web Link to read/reach all poems running into 330 pages.	185

Section IV: Life, Myth & Legacy

12 27	Happy 199th Birthday: Emily Brontë An interesting article [from https://www.annebronte.org/] on her 199th Birthday.	187
13 28	The Making of Emily Brontë A new FILM imagines the events that inspired the notoriously private author to write "Wuthering Heights" + several pictures + Related Web Link	193
14 29	Reimagining how Emily Brontë died A new interpretation of the only existing record from the time of Emily Brontë's death – other mysteries + a picture + a Web Link	203
15 30	'Myth' of Emily Brontë's death She "refused medicine [and] rejected medical advice" + Narrates the factful and interesting detailed information.	207

World Literature **Summary**

10min



Anne Brontë

S.No	Chapters	Pages
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0232	Writer of Genius & Woman of Courage Critical Analysis of her birth and death + related photos + https://www.annebronte.org/	223
0333	Grave Error Corrected Elaborate description with photos	226
0434	Poetry Foundation >>> AB Detailed Historical Introduction + 2 pictures	229
0535	Some Videos Containing 13 videos + 3 audios + covering more than 48 hours	243
0636	Celebration of Women Writer >>> AB Providing SEVEN web links covering several important/interesting topics	247
0737	Bibliography This article is from Oxford University Press	248
Section II: Major Works		
0838	Agnes Grey by AB Her first novel + Providing the detailed analysis + Plot + Theme + Characters + Genre + Style	252
0939	The Tenant of Wildfell Hall by AB Her second novel + Providing the detailed literary analysis + Plot + Theme + Characters + Genre + Style + general relations + Marriage + Motherhood + social comedy + social drama + contemporary reforms + suppression + adaptations	259

Section III: Legacy

1040

The Legacy of Anne Brontë

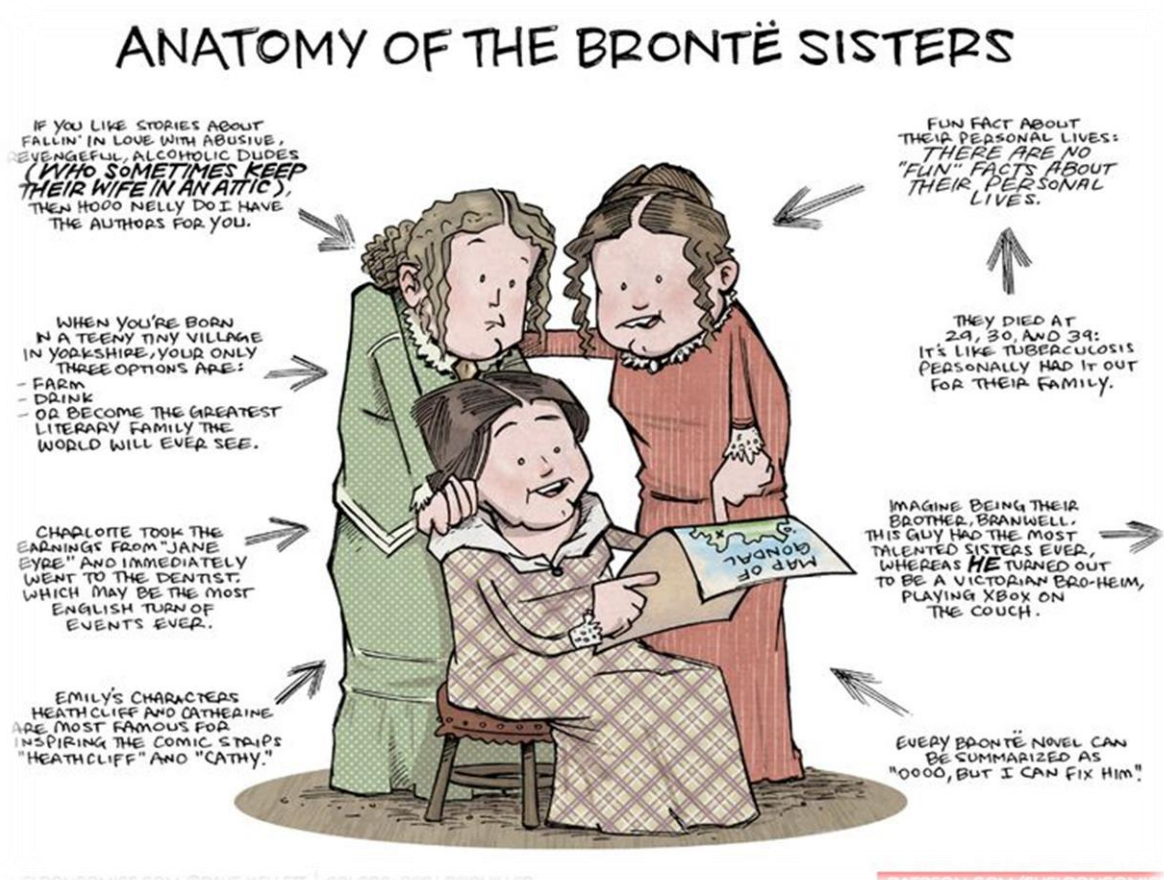
Some important pictures + information + Details

285



Common Content

S No.	Chapters	Pages
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0242	Biography of Bronte Family All family members are introduced.	293
0343	Chronology <=> Brontë Family Timeline + their life events in order.	296
0444	Bronte Personage Museum Where & how their legacy is preserved today.	316
0545	All Bronte Adaptations All modern adaptations to show their lasting impact.	330
0646	Bests Books about the Brontës 30 selected important books	331





1816

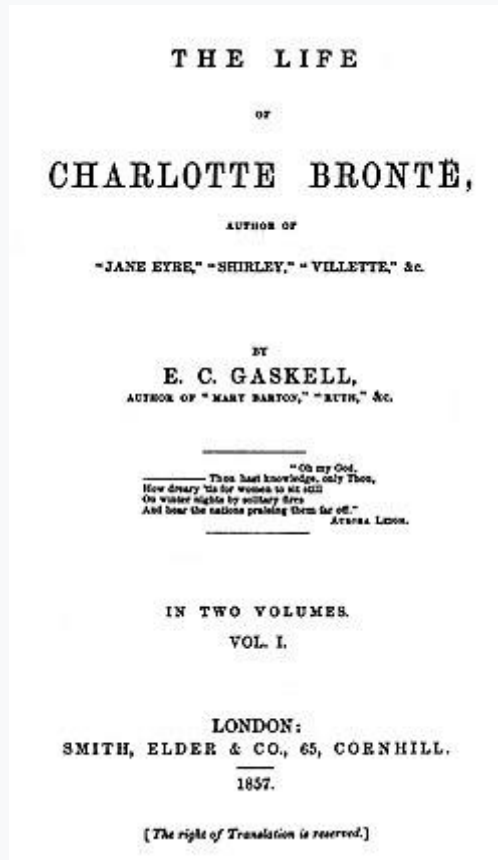


1855



Charlotte Brontë <:> A Profile

The Life of Charlotte Brontë



Title page of the first edition, 1857

Author	Elizabeth Gaskell
Language	English
Genre	Biography
Publisher	Smith, Elder & Co.
Publication date	1857
Publication place	United Kingdom

The Life of Charlotte Brontë by [Elizabeth Gaskell](#) is the influential first [biography](#) of [Charlotte Brontë](#). Relying on multiple first hand

testimonies and Gaskell's own memories of Brontë, its subjectivity was challenged immediately on publication and while its integrity is contested among scholars, it remains a significant source for all subsequent writing on the Brontë family. Its [first edition](#), published in the spring of [1857](#), was withdrawn after complaints of slander were made to its publisher [Smith, Elder & Co.](#), prompting them to issue censored second and third editions within five months. Despite initial controversy it was praised by contemporary critics, inspired literary tourism to the Yorkshire setting of the book which continues to the present, and anticipated social and cultural discussions about the situation of women in male-dominated cultures half a century before the formal women's movements began in Britain. Now it is considered an important text that expanded the possibilities of the biographical genre and established the lives, as well as the work, of Brontë family as notable cultural subjects.

Origins

Gaskell was friends with Brontë for the last five years of Brontë's life, corresponding with her, staying at each others' homes and becoming acquainted with her personal circle and family circumstances in Haworth, West Yorkshire. After Brontë's death in 1855 she was approached by Brontë's father to produce a formal tribute to her, which she developed into her two-volume biography *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*, published two years later.

Controversy

Shortly after the book was published, complaints of slander were raised by individuals named or identified by Gaskell in the text, among them Brontë's own father and her husband, the headmaster and teachers of the school Brontë depicted in hellish terms in her first published novel *Jane Eyre*, a lover of Brontë's brother, and several of Brontë's most critical reviewers. These complaints and their resolutions were reported by the press at the time as a national scandal, with some complainants publishing their own

rebuttals, such as that by the Rev. [William Carus Wilson](#) with the title "A refutation of the statements in 'The life of Charlotte Brontë,' regarding the Casterton Clergy Daughters' School, when at Cowan Bridge".

Contemporary views

In her 1995 history of the Brontë family, *The Brontës*, Juliet Barker proposes that Gaskell's sources were flawed and she was guided by a desire to sensationalise Brontë's life for commercial gain. Subsequent investigations, such as Graham Watson's 2024 biography *The Invention of Charlotte Brontë*, posit that while being selective to protect Brontë's privacy, evidence demonstrates Gaskell was a comprehensive and balanced researcher, seeking to deliver a social vindication to Brontë, but that she ultimately compromised her book's integrity to defuse its legal challenges.

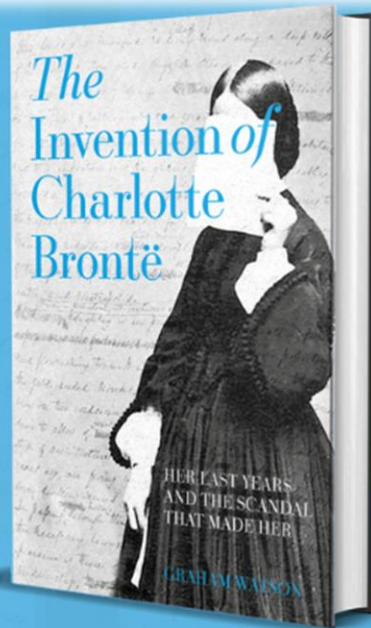
In 2017, *The Guardian* named *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* one of the 100 best nonfiction books of all time.

{Ref: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Life_of_Charlotte_Bront%C3%AB}



Biography [CB] after 160 Years

Brimming with lies, hagiography and exaggeration! Elizabeth Gaskell's sensational 1857 biography of her friend Charlotte Brontë continues to divide historians, critics and Brontë fans over 160 years after its first publication.



Discover the Brontë family as
they've never been
seen before...

Some see it as a unique first-hand insight into the Brontë family by one of Britain's greatest writers, while others still dismiss it as a propaganda exercise compromised by unreliable information and pernicious gossip. What is not in doubt is its considerable influence on English literary history, both as the first biography of a woman writer by another and as the model for the hundreds of books about the Brontës that followed. As a runaway bestseller beset by controversy it almost instantly established the romantic myth of the family and accelerated the literary pilgrimages to their Yorkshire hometown, Haworth. After so much time, can we test the integrity of the book and verify or refute its claims? My book, **The Invention of Charlotte Brontë** aims to do so.



The first challenge of any historical investigation is to distinguish and separate the first-hand historical evidence from the usually more elaborate later interpretations transmitted from one biographer to another, that have collected errors and confirmed biases. With a history as contested as that of the Brontë family this is even more embroiled, as cultural trends apply new interpretations and changing tastes elevate or demote one of the three Brontë sisters over the others, as though only a limited amount of praise can be apportioned and divided between them. Answers, as always, lie in the historical record. Letters and recollections by the Brontë and Gaskell families, their friends and associates and other first-hand witnesses tell rather a different story that challenges many received notions about the Brontës, especially around the writing and reception of Elizabeth Gaskell's *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*.

Gaskell and Brontë had been friends for the last five years of Charlotte's life, having corresponded with each other for a year before that. Both were professional women who had published well received novels, both came from clerical families and suffered bereavements early in life. There the parallels ended. Gaskell was married with children, hosted intellectual evenings in her large Manchester home with the finest minds of the day, while Brontë, unmarried and practically broken by the recent deaths of her three adult siblings lived in crippling solitude with her volatile elderly father in a remote Yorkshire mill town. When Gaskell began to wonder how one of the greatest talents of their generation could have lived such a deprived life, the germ for telling Charlotte Brontë's story formed. Crucially, the anecdotes Charlotte herself shared, the 'wild strange facts' about the talented quartet of ignored sibling geniuses practically raising and educating themselves in isolation, so captivated Gaskell that when Brontë

died and her father asked her to address scurrilous newspaper stories about his family, she was already well prepared.

Nevertheless, refusing to rely solely on her own recollections, she embarked on a remarkable campaign to track down and interview everyone who had known Charlotte Brontë, from former schoolfriends and nursemaids, to neighbouring shopkeepers and fellow writers like William Thackeray and Harriet Martineau, and to read as many of her personal letters as her friends were willing to donate, despite the reserve and caution several felt about making the details of her life public. Even more remarkably, Elizabeth Gaskell travelled to the continent, to Belgium, to interview in person the married man Charlotte nursed a secret love for while she was a student. Looked at together, the accounts conflicted and Gaskell devoted herself to reconstructing a truthful account of a troubled woman whose determination and intellect made her a visionary writer. But Gaskell knew that telling the truth would be controversial. She felt Charlotte had been maligned and manipulated by many of those around her and was determined to shame them publicly, warning her publishers to familiarise themselves with libel laws.

When *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* was published in 1857 it triggered a firestorm of controversy that led to the first edition being withdrawn and rewritten twice in six months. Many of those named in it objected to Gaskell's indiscretions or felt slandered, with several threatening to sue both Gaskell and her publisher. Knowing a court case would require the testimonies of many socially and economically disadvantaged women, as some key biographical statements had come from servants, Gaskell chose to take the blame and publicly admit errors that she privately insisted were true. It was a noble political choice, to sacrifice her own public standing in order to appease her complainants and extinguish legal threats. But the result has gone uncorrected and Gaskell's reputation as an unreliable biographer remains. Setting the record straight and delivering justice to both Charlotte Brontë and Elizabeth Gaskell is long overdue.



Why Charlotte Brontë still speaks to us 200 years after her Birth

Jane Eyre has been retold over and over again, but remains eternally relevant.

What is it that makes generation after generation respond to Charlotte Brontë's books, and in particular *Jane Eyre*?

Brontë's novels are bildungsromane, but they differ markedly from, say, the coming-of-age novels of Jane Austen.

The education of the Austen heroine is a moral one, of a kind clearly mapped out for the reader. We know, through some very explicit signposting, that in order to move from the family home to marriage with "a single man in possession of a good fortune", she must learn to temper sensibility with sense, or fight prejudice, or a tendency to meddle or be easily persuaded.

Brontë heroines, on the other hand, struggle with questions that are psychologically complex before they are ethical: how to refuse the temptation of a relationship where we are not truly loved; how to achieve respect without status; how to continue to care for the friend we envy.

The answers to such questions are not foreshadowed, and, scandalously for many of her first readers, they privilege principles of self-knowledge and self-expression over conventional Christian moralism.

Moreover, Brontë doesn't give the impression that the eventual resolutions her heroines achieve are easily won, necessarily worth the sacrifice, or "universally acknowledged".

As biographer and scholar Juliet Barker has noted,

All Charlotte's heroines [...] were orphans.

They are not beautiful or rich (typically they must work to support themselves), yet they assert their right to a beautiful and rich interior life.

"Do you think, because I am poor, obscure, plain and little, I am soulless and heartless? You think wrong!" Jane Eyre declares to Rochester.

Anyone, these books assure us, however little else they may have, can hold on to the integrity of their feelings. And they can seek to express them, with care and accuracy, in language.

Jane Eyre was Brontë's first published novel, but not her first work of fiction. She and her equally precocious younger siblings Branwell, Emily and Anne, had been producing "little books" since Charlotte was 11. In *The History of the Year*, her second oldest surviving manuscript, written in March 1829, she tells:

Papa bought Branwell some soldiers at Leeds. When Papa came home it was night and we were in bed, so next morning Branwell came to our door with a box of soldiers. Emily and I jumped out of bed and I snatched up one and exclaimed, 'This is the Duke of Wellington! It shall be mine' When I said this, Emily likewise took one and said it should be hers. When Anne came down, she took one also.

The toy soldiers were to initiate what the Brontë children referred to as "our plays": extended games set in virtual worlds – Glass Town, Angria and Gondal – scripted in miniature books in minute handwriting.



A miniature manuscript dated 1830, written by Charlotte Brontë when she was 14. It contains over 4,000 words on 19 pages.

The siblings went on writing these co-authored tales and poems until well into their twenties. They are notable not only for their early precocity of language but for their emergent, blatant eroticism. Their heroes are Byronic, and their heroines beautiful, wealthy and typically masochistic.

Although the Brontë sisters' novels show traces of the romantic and gothic elements of these early experiments, "poor obscure, plain and little" Jane Eyre, and the cryptic, damaged and independent Lucy Snowe of *Villette* (1853) are a far cry from such creations.

Once she began writing novels, Charlotte drew on memory as well as imagination, and the sumptuous settings of Angria gave way to a recognisable world of sharply visualised, everyday images: the “torture of thrusting the swelled, raw and stiff toes into my shoes in the morning” in *Jane Eyre*; Tartar the mastiff “snuff[ing] fresh flowers” spilled on the floor in ***Shirley*** (1849); simple pieces of furniture swimming into vision as Lucy Snowe in *Villette* recovers from illness.

It’s these realist details, as well as the passionate struggles and feelings they anchor, that ensure that we hold Charlotte Brontë’s novels in mind long after we have closed their covers.

The Brontë sisters published their first poems and novels under pseudonyms – Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell. While a collection of their poems, published in 1846, sold only three copies, the mystery of their authorship became an issue after the runaway success of *Jane Eyre*, which came out in the following year.

Readers and reviewers speculated, not just about the gender of the authors, but also as to whether they were indeed three, or one or two writers.

So began the complex entanglement, which continues to this day, of critical appreciation of the Brontë novels with biographical speculation.

Jane Eyre’s experiences at Lowood reproduce Charlotte’s at Cowan Bridge School. Both *Villette* and *The Professor* (1857) draw on her time as first a student and then a teacher in the Pensionnat Heger in Brussels. And *Shirley*’s Shirley Keeldar and Caroline Helstone are revived portraits of Emily and Anne, both of whom died during the novel’s composition.

The temptation to multiply connections between art and life was given further impetus with the publication of Elizabeth Gaskell’s ***Life of Charlotte Brontë*** (1857) two years after Charlotte’s death, a work which attempted to curate Charlotte’s posthumous reputation and shield her from accusations of coarseness and lack of femininity.

Gaskell succeeded, however, in setting in place an enduring myth, of Charlotte Brontë the pious clergyman’s daughter from a sheltered Yorkshire village, whose scandalous depictions of female desire and outspokenness were the product of innocence rather than first-hand experience.

It’s the thrill of each new reader, 200 years after her birth, to respond afresh to the startlingly modern psychology of her characters, the direct address of her first-person narration and the sensuous immediacy of the 19th century world she so compellingly evokes.



Charlotte Brontë (1816-1855)

Biography

{Ref: <https://www.gale.com/intl/databases-explored/literature/charlotte-bronte>}

Charlotte Brontë's fame and influence rest on a very slender canon of published works: only four novels and some contributions to a volume of poetry. Her reputation may be explained in part by the astounding success of her first novel, *Jane Eyre* (1847); it owes much also to the romantic appeal of her personal history, given prominence soon after her death by Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell's excellent biography, a work preeminent in its genre. Of greater importance, perhaps, is the recognition by historians of fiction that Charlotte Brontë's work made a significant contribution to the development of the novel; her explorations of emotional repression and the feminine psyche introduced a new depth and intensity to the study of character and motive in fiction, anticipating in some respects the work of such writers as George Eliot and D. H. Lawrence.

Her strength as a novelist lies in her ability to portray in moving detail the inner struggles of women who are endowed with a powerful capacity for feeling, yet whose social circumstances deny them the opportunity for intellectual or emotional fulfillment. Charlotte Brontë was not in any formal sense a proponent of women's rights, but in her writing she speaks out strongly against the injustices suffered by women in a society that restricts their freedom of action and exploits their dependent status. Her protests grew out of her own experience, which provided much of the material for her fiction; though she once insisted that "we only suffer reality to *Suggest*, never to *dictate*," her novels include many characters and incidents recognizably drawn from her life, and her heroines have much in common with their creator.

Charlotte Brontë was born on 21 April 1816 at Thornton in the West Riding of Yorkshire. Her father, Patrick Brontë (1777-1861), a native of County Down in Ireland, had risen above the poverty of his family to become an undergraduate at St. John's College, Cambridge, and in 1807 was ordained a priest in the Church of England. In 1812 he met, courted, and married Maria Branwell (1783-1821), a pious and educated young woman from Cornwall. Their life together was tragically brief; Maria bore six children in seven years (Maria in 1813; Elizabeth, 1815; Charlotte; Patrick Branwell, 1817; Emily Jane, 1818; Anne, 1820), then died of cancer in 1821 at the age of thirty-

eight. Her death may have been hastened by the family's move in 1820 from Thornton to Haworth, where Mr. Brontë had been appointed perpetual curate. Beautiful as the landscape might be around Haworth, physical conditions in this rugged little mill town must have been harsh and unpleasant for the parson's delicate wife. The Brontës' new home was a stone-flagged parsonage, standing exposed to the elements at the top of a steep hill and on the edge of the open moors. Its situation was rendered even more unhealthy by its proximity to the overcrowded cemetery of St. Michael's Church. Sanitation in Haworth was primitive: as late as 1850 a government inspector found open sewers and overflowing cesspits on the main street, next to outlets for drinking water. It is hardly surprising that infant mortality rates in Haworth were high or that there were frequent outbreaks of cholera and typhoid. Throughout her life, Charlotte Brontë was to suffer from fevers, colds, and bilious attacks undoubtedly attributable to this most inhospitable environment.

Nor was there much consolation to be found in the society of Haworth. Its inhabitants, even thirty years later, struck Mrs. Gaskell as a "wild, rough population" among whom there was "little display of any of the amenities of life." Mr. Brontë won the respect of his parishioners, but there was little social contact between the townsfolk and the family at the parsonage; the Brontë children thus turned to one another for companionship and entertainment. This interdependence was intensified after the death of Mrs. Brontë. The early loss of their mother had a lasting effect on the children, particularly Charlotte; all her published novels are concerned in one way or another with young women who must lead a lonely path through life without the warmth and security of parental love. Not that the young Brontës were uncared for: after Maria's death, her sister Elizabeth Branwell came to live at the parsonage and supervised the household until her own death in 1842. Aunt Branwell was a rather stern, formal woman, however, with rigid and somewhat ascetic religious views; "the children respected her," notes Mrs. Gaskell, "and had that sort of affection for her which is generated by esteem; but I do not think they ever freely loved her." Yet the children were happy enough: they played and roamed the moors together; they read widely under the vigorous tutelage of their father, discussed social and political issues of the day, and developed those qualities of intellect and inventiveness that were to flower in the works of their maturity.

In August 1824 Mr. Brontë sent Charlotte to join Maria and Elizabeth at the recently opened Clergy Daughters' School at Cowan Bridge, near Tunstall in Lancashire. This was a charitable institution, where the daughters of poor clergymen might receive an education suited to their station and be prepared for future employment as governesses. Its founder was William Carus Wilson, a well-intentioned but overzealous clergyman who appears to have given little thought to the physical needs of the children in his charge; he imposed a stern regime of ascetic piety and self-denial which, in combination with inadequate attention to proper diet and the unhealthy situation of the school buildings, produced a succession of illnesses among the pupils and an outbreak of typhoid in April 1825. Charlotte Brontë would later give a vivid portrait in *Jane Eyre* of the school and its director; though colored by personal bitterness, her account of "Lowood Institution" is in essentials an accurate depiction of the harshness of life at Cowan Bridge. Writing to a friend in 1848 concerning the advisability of sending children to the Clergy Daughters' School (then removed to Casterton), Brontë speaks in very matter-of-fact tones of the school's "rickety infancy": "Typhus fever decimated the school periodically, and consumption and scrofula in every variety of form, [which] bad air and water, and bad, insufficient diet can generate,

preyed on the ill-fated pupils." Her own sisters were among the victims of such conditions: first Maria, then Elizabeth, contracted consumption, were removed from the school, and died at home, Maria on 6 May 1825 and her sister on 15 June 1825. The death of Maria was especially painful to Charlotte; her eldest sister had become a guide and mentor, and Charlotte would later eulogize her patient virtue and premature wisdom in *Jane Eyre* in the portrait of Helen Burns.

After this tragic loss, Mr. Brontë decided to educate his children himself, and for the next six years they lived at home under the watchful eyes of Aunt Branwell and Tabitha Ackroyd, the parsonage servant. More than ever they were thrown upon their own resources; yet, despite their lack of social contact, they were never bored or unoccupied. Mr. Brontë encouraged them to read--and they read voraciously: Shakespeare, Milton, Bunyan, Dryden, Scott, Wordsworth, Byron; the *Arabian Nights Entertainments*; Whig and Tory newspapers; monthly magazines, notably *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*; illustrated annuals like the *Keepsake*. Though their own collection was small, the Brontës had access to the library of the Keighley Mechanics' Institute, less than four miles away, which Mr. Brontë had joined soon after its foundation in 1825. The breadth of their reading attests to their father's liberality of mind; it also helps to explain the curious variety of subjects and techniques displayed in the children's own early writings.

Their apprenticeship to literature had begun before the deaths of Maria and Elizabeth with the composition and performance of little plays under Maria's direction. After the return from Cowan Bridge, Charlotte and Branwell assumed the leadership in devising imaginary worlds populated by romantic figures from myth, history, and high society, whose doings they chronicled in a series of interwoven tales. The first of the series, the "Young Men's Play," originated with Mr. Brontë's gift to Branwell in June 1826 of a set of twelve toy soldiers; each of the children took one, naming it after a particular hero (Charlotte called hers after the Duke of Wellington), and made up stories, eventually in written form, about the exploits of the "Twelves." That a group of imaginative children should collaborate in the creation of a fantasy world is by no means unusual; what sets the storymaking of the youthful Brontës apart is that it occupied them all well into adulthood--Emily and Anne were still devising plots for their world of Gondal in 1845--and came dangerously close to an unhealthy obsession from which Charlotte had to free herself in 1839 by a conscious and explicit act of rejection.

The bulk of Charlotte's juvenile writings is concerned with the history of Angria, a kingdom that grew out of her extended collaboration with Branwell. It began as a confederacy of the "Twelves," located in Africa, whose capital was called "Glass Town" and whose rulers were four genii: Tallii (Charlotte), Brannii, Emmii, and Annii. The geography of this new land, first described in Charlotte's tale "The Twelve Adventurers" (manuscript dated 15 April 1829), was inspired in part by the Reverend J. Goldsmith's *Grammar of General Geography* (1803) and articles in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*; its supernatural inhabitants were unmistakably related to their counterparts in the *Arabian Nights* and Ridley's *Tales of the Genii* (1764); its cities borrowed features from those depicted in the extravagant pictures of John Martin, whose work was often reproduced in contemporary annuals; its populace came from the society columns of newspapers or magazines, from portraits of the aristocracy which the young Brontës copied from books, and from the political controversies of the day which they keenly followed and eagerly discussed. This mixture of fantasy and reality is well exemplified by Charlotte's "Tales of the Islanders" (June 1829-June

1830), an extended narrative set in a fairy-tale world in which her characters debate the political and religious issues of contemporary England, especially the Catholic Emancipation Act of April 1829 and the storm surrounding the Duke of Wellington. In this story Charlotte also introduced the Duke's sons, the Marquis of Douro and Lord Charles Wellesley, who were to take over from their father as leading personages in the world of Glass Town.

As the early "plays" gradually merged into the history of the Glass Town Confederacy and the actions of its great notables, the children collaborated in a systematic charting of events and relationships. In January 1829 Branwell began *Branwells Blackwoods Magazine* (subsequently to be called *Blackwoods Young Mens Magazine*), an imitation of the children's favorite periodical reproduced in miniature form, presumably to correspond to the size of their original soldier heroes. Charlotte took over the editorship in August, and under the pseudonym of Captain Tree, or in the characters of Douro or Lord Charles, wrote poems and stories about Glass Town society, frequently alluding to characters or incidents developed in Branwell's manuscripts. The narratives became more complex; Glass Town acquired greater sophistication and became Verreopolis, then Verdopolis; Branwell began to chronicle the military and political upheavals that were to become the focus of his interest in the emerging kingdom of Angria, while Charlotte gave more and more of her attention to the personalities and domestic relations of Verdopolitan celebrities. Her tale of "Albion and Marina" (October 1830) introduced the theme of passionate romantic love that was to dominate her subsequent contributions to the joint saga.

Charlotte's participation in Verdopolitan affairs came to a temporary halt in January 1831 when, with the financial support of her godparents, the Atkinsons, she was sent to Roe Head, a small private school near Mirfield under the direction of Miss Margaret Wooler and her sisters. Here she stayed for a year and a half in much happier circumstances than at Cowan Bridge; indeed, Miss Wooler was to become a lifelong friend, and Brontë would return to Roe Head in 1835 as an assistant teacher. Here also she met the two girls whose enduring friendship was to lift her out of her social isolation at Haworth and to sustain her often in times of emotional duress. Ellen Nussey was a quiet, timid, pious girl whose family lived at Rydings, a big house in Birstall that would later lend some of its features to Thornfield Hall in *Jane Eyre*. Stolid, unimaginative, conservative, Ellen yet possessed a ready fund of sympathy and affection that quickly won a response from Charlotte. Her other newfound friend, Mary Taylor, offered a startling contrast of personality. Mary's father, a cloth manufacturer and banker at Gomersal, had suffered bankruptcy in 1825 and spent the rest of his life working to pay off his debts. From him Mary inherited strong Radical views, a blunt outspokenness, and an independence of spirit that would lead her to immigrate to New Zealand. Ellen and Mary became integral parts of Charlotte's life; the three corresponded regularly for over twenty years, exchanging news about themselves and their families, and Charlotte's visits to their homes provided her with a wealth of impressions which she was to draw on when she came to write her great novels. *Shirley* (1849) is especially indebted to Brontë's memories of the Taylors, who are presented there as the Yorke family; Mary herself appears as young Rose Yorke, as well as lends some of her ideas about society to the novel's eponymous heroine. Ellen's shy and retiring nature contributes something to the depiction of Caroline Helstone; and Shirley's residence, "Fieldhead," is based on Oakwell Hall, an Elizabethan house near Birstall owned by relatives of the Nussey family. When Mrs. Gaskell came to write the biography of Charlotte Brontë, Ellen Nussey and Mary

Taylor provided her with lengthy reminiscences, and Nussey was able to supply her with over 300 letters by Brontë which she had kept over the years.

At Roe Head, Charlotte worked hard to make up for the deficiencies in her formal education; Ellen Nussey later recalled that she "always seemed to feel that a deep responsibility rested upon her; that she was an object of expense to those at home, and that she must use every moment to attain the purpose for which she was sent to school, i.e., to fit herself for governess life...." On her return to Haworth in May 1832 Charlotte continued her studies and tutored her younger sisters; but though much of her time was thus occupied, she had not lost interest in the story of Veropolitan society and renewed her contributions to the saga. In "The Bridal" (August 1832) she enlarged upon the relationship between the Marquis of Douro and his first great love, Marian Hume, filling out the Byronic lineaments of her hero's character and developing the themes of temptation and betrayal, duty and desire, that were to recur throughout her juvenilia.

Branwell's writing at this time was mainly concerned with the history and politics of the Confederacy, and his pedantically detailed narratives make dull reading beside Charlotte's lively and melodramatic accounts of romantic intrigue and rival lovers. The children still worked together on the intricate elaboration of their world, and Charlotte's stories assume a knowledge on the reader's part of events described elsewhere by Branwell; but after her return from Roe Head, Charlotte's writing shows a distinct advance in descriptive power and depth of character portrayal. Arthur Wellesley, Marquis of Douro, now Duke of Zamorna, becomes the dominant figure in most of the prose narratives produced by Charlotte after 1832. A compound of moody grandeur, dashing bravery, and sadistic heartlessness, Zamorna wears a mantle woven from Milton and Byron: "O Zamorna! what eyes those are glancing under the deep shadow of that raven crest! They bode no good.... Satan gave them their glory to deepen the midnight gloom that always follows where their lustre has fallen most lovingly.... All here is passion and fire unquenchable. Impetuous sin, stormy pride, diving and soaring enthusiasm, war and poetry, are kindling their fires in all his veins, and his wild blood boils from his heart and back again like a torrent of new-sprung lava. Young duke? Young demon!" ("A Peep into a Picture Book," May 1834). While Branwell explores Zamorna's political fortunes in the newly created kingdom of Angria (established in the narratives of 1834), Charlotte follows the twists and turns of his unpredictable nature as he torments a succession of beautiful, heartsick women, whose Griselda-like meekness in suffering serves only to arouse his scorn or anger.

The Angrian stories of this period also see the development of a subject touched on in Charlotte's earliest narratives, the antagonism between two brothers. This first appeared in the form of Lord Charles Wellesley's hostility toward his older brother Arthur; their rivalry gives way to the deeper rift between Edward and William Percy, the sons of Zamorna's archenemy Alexander Percy, earl of Northangerland. The young Percys are first described in Branwell's story "The Wool is Rising" (June 1834); cast off by their father, they establish themselves in the wool trade, but Edward's cold ambition soon leads him to a harsh assertion of mastery over William. Charlotte picked up this theme in several stories ("The Spell," June-July 1834; "My Angria and the Angrians," October 1834; "The Duke of Zamorna," July 1838; "The Ashworths," 1839-1840); ultimately it would find its way into the first of her adult novels, *The Professor* (1857), in the relationship between Edward and William Crimsworth.

Charlotte's absorption in the Angrian world was interrupted in July 1835 when, at the invitation of Miss Wooler, she returned to Roe Head as a teacher. She was accompanied by Emily, who was to receive free tuition as part of the arrangement, but Emily's unhappiness at her exile from Haworth soon led to her replacement by Anne. Despite Miss Wooler's kindness, Charlotte found her duties tedious and distasteful; separated from her creative partner Branwell and allowed little free time, she became increasingly frustrated by the fetters placed on her imagination. A series of diary jottings from this period known as the "Roe Head Journals" show the extent to which the demands of daily routine clashed with powerful inner yearnings. "All this day," she wrote on 11 August 1836, "I have been in a dream half-miserable & half ecstatic miserable because I could not follow it out uninterruptedly, ecstatic because it shewed almost in the vivid light of reality the ongoings of the infernal world.... The thought came over me am I to spend all the best part of my life in this wretched bondage forcibly suppressing my rage at the idleness the apathy & the hyperbolical & most asinine stupidity of those fatheaded oafs & on compulsion assuming an air of kindness patience & assiduity?" She recorded waking visions of Angrian scenes which presented themselves to her with frightening vividness; her attempts to repress such imaginings produced feelings of guilt and melancholy. "If you knew my thoughts," she wrote to Ellen Nussey on 10 May 1836, "the dreams that absorb me; and the fiery imagination that at times eats me up and makes me feel Society as it is, wretchedly insipid, you would pity and I dare say despise me."

School vacations brought some relief and allowed Brontë to continue her Angrian narratives. "Passing Events" (April 1836), "Julia" (June 1837), and "Four Years Ago" (July 1837) all develop aspects of the political drama worked out by Branwell, but focus on scene and character rather than on plot. The "infernal world" still exerted its power over her; but Brontë--now past her twentieth year--was moving away from the colorful excitement of simple melodrama toward a maturer exploration of feeling, especially the suffering of women in love. The later Angrian romances reflect this new maturity in their treatment as well as in subject matter. "Mina Laury" (January 1838), in its depiction of Zamorna's heartlessness and Mina's selfless devotion, displays greater unity and coherence than Brontë's earlier stories, and Byronic excess in characterization now gives way to more realistic analysis of character and motive. Setting, too, in these later stories is less exotic, more suggestive of the writer's own environment; in "Stancliff's Hotel" (June 1838) and "Henry Hastings" (February-March 1839) the cloud-capped palaces of Angria are replaced by country houses in a recognizably English landscape. "Henry Hastings" also gives prominence to characters and situations that reemerge in Brontë's adult fiction. The female protagonist, Elizabeth Hastings, is reserved and self-effacing, but her calm exterior conceals intense emotion. Like her yet-distant successor Jane Eyre she is faced with a conflict between duty and desire and is saved from a surrender to feeling by her concern for self-respect. There is an element of autobiography in Brontë's depiction of Elizabeth as "the little dignified Governess" who dresses plainly, values her independence, and loves her degenerate and reckless brother despite his public dishonor. Branwell had written several stories in the persona of Henry Hastings; through the story of Elizabeth's loyalty to her reprobate brother, Brontë might express her feelings toward Branwell, whose conduct was already giving evidence of that weakness of character that would lead him to alcoholism and drugs.

Anne's departure from Miss Wooler's school (now relocated at Dewsbury Moor) in December 1837, and her own increasingly depressed spirits, led Charlotte to give up

her post and return to Haworth in May 1838. Her respite was brief, however; the family's precarious financial circumstances, made more difficult by Branwell's failure to establish himself as painter in Bradford, led Charlotte Brontë to seek employment once again, and in May 1839 she became governess to the children of the Sidgwick family of Stonegappe, near Lothersdale. The experience was an unhappy one: the Sidgwicks treated Brontë with what seemed to her to be undue coldness and condescension; the children tormented her by their rudeness and lack of discipline; and after less than three months she was back at home, telling Ellen Nussey that "I never was so glad to get out of a house in my life." Relieved of this burden, Brontë returned to her writing with new vigor and produced "Caroline Vernon" (July-December 1839), the last of her Angrian tales. The account of a young girl's infatuation with her guardian, the Duke of Zamorna, "Caroline Vernon" shows another advance in Brontë's analysis of feminine psychology. Romantic passion is here treated with critical detachment and seen as a destructive force; Brontë does not identify with her heroine, presenting her instead as an inexperienced and undisciplined adolescent, "raw, flighty & romantic."

Sheltered though her own life was in comparison to that of her heroines, Charlotte Brontë discovered to her surprise that she herself was capable of arousing admiration: twice in the same year she received proposals of marriage. The first came from Henry Nussey, Ellen's brother, a curate in Sussex, who wrote in March 1839 to offer Brontë his hand, since "in due time he should want a wife to take care of his pupils." She had no difficulty in turning down this cool suitor, telling Ellen that she could not feel "that intense attachment which would make me willing to die for him; and, if ever I marry, it must be in that light of adoration that I will regard my husband." Her second proposal, the following August, came from another clergyman, an impetuous young Irish curate who was smitten after only one meeting with her; him, too, she refused. The prospects of her finding a man she could truly love seemed remote; "I'm certainly doomed to be an old maid," she wrote to Ellen Nussey; "I can't expect another chance--never mind I made up my mind to that fate ever since I was twelve years old."

The sober awareness that her dreams of passionate love would never be matched by reality may have contributed to her decision to abandon Angria after "Caroline Vernon." In an undated manuscript placed by most scholars at the end of 1839, Brontë announces her desire "to quit for awhile that burning clime where we have sojourned too long--its skies flame--the glow of sunset is always upon it--the mind would cease from excitement and turn now to a cooler region where the dawn breaks grey and sober, and the coming day for a time at least is subdued by clouds." In penning these lines, Brontë was probably thinking about her first venture into realistic prose fiction, which took form in the winter of 1839-1840, and in a revised version of early 1841 culminated in the unfinished story known as "Ashworth." In part, this is a return to old subjects; the central figure, a Yorkshire industrialist named Alexander Ashworth, owes much in character and personal history to Alexander Percy, the Northangerland of Branwell's narratives. Percy's sons Edward and William, already depicted as rivals in the Angrian cycle, reappear as Edward and William Ashworth, and like their earlier namesakes are cast out by their father to make their own way in the world. However, when the story shifts from the Ashworths to a picture of life in a girls' school, focusing on the lonely figure of an orphaned child, the narrative gains new life and interest, and Brontë can be seen moving in the direction of a favorite theme in her later novels. That she regarded "Ashworth" as a serious venture into adult fiction is apparent from her

request for an opinion from Hartley Coleridge (son of the poet S. T. Coleridge), to whom she sent a portion of the manuscript in December 1840, describing her story as a "demisemi novelette." Coleridge's verdict evidently was unfavorable, since in her reply Brontë promised to commit her protagonists to oblivion. This was not the first time that she had sought advice from a well-known writer; in 1837 she had corresponded with the poet laureate Robert Southey, who had been similarly discouraging, warning her that "literature cannot be the business of a woman's life, and it ought not to be. The more she is engaged in her proper duties, the less leisure will she have for it...."

Under the pressure of "proper duties," Brontë left home once again in March 1841 to become a governess in the White family at Rawdon, near Bradford. The Whites proved to be more amiable employers than the Sidgwicks; but Brontë left them in December to set in motion a plan the family had discussed for six months. This was for the three sisters to open their own school, with financial support from Aunt Branwell; as a preliminary step to strengthen their qualifications for such a venture, Charlotte and Emily wanted to spend a half-year in school on the Continent, where they might improve their grasp of foreign languages. Belgium was fixed upon, since there the cost of living was low; also, Mary and Martha Taylor were at school in Brussels and spoke favorably of their experience.

After a short time spent sight-seeing in London (Charlotte Brontë would recall the excitement of this first visit to the capital in both *The Professor* and *Villette*, 1853), Charlotte and Emily, accompanied by Mr. Brontë, arrived at the Pensionnat Heger in Brussels on 15 February 1842, there to recommence the lives of schoolgirls at the ages of twenty-five and twenty-three respectively. The school's owner and directress was Claire Zoeé Parent Heger, who was thirty-seven years old at the time of the Brontës' arrival in the rue d'Isabelle. In 1836 she had married Constantine Heger, a widower five years her junior, who taught at the Athénée Royal de Bruxelles; after their marriage, M. Heger retained his post at the Athénée, but also assisted his wife in the operation of her school and gave classes there in literature. He was something of a romantic figure, having fought at the barricades during the Belgian revolution of 1830, and displaying a moody impetuosity that undoubtedly had a special appeal for one whose imaginary heroes had been similarly governed by violence of feeling. From the outset, the Hegers showed great kindness to the two strange little Englishwomen. Their lessons in French literature and composition were supervised by M. Heger, who assigned readings in the great French writers and corrected their exercises with comments aimed at sharpening their perception of style. Under Heger's guidance, Charlotte Brontë encountered the works of such authors as Chateaubriand, Hugo, and Lamartine and copied out extracts from their writings; she also wrote a variety of *devoirs* on such topics as "La Justice Humaine," "Le Palais de la Mort," "La Chute des Feuilles," and "La Mort de Napoléon," which, despite the inevitable stiffness of academic set pieces, show commendable fluency and precision. Charlotte Brontë's adult writings in English, characterized by a poetic quality often derived from syntactic inversions, antitheses, and repetitions, would owe much to these exercises performed under the demanding tutelage of Constantin Heger; and her study of French romanticism taught her how to make language convey heightened states of feeling normally expressed in poetic form.

The sisters made few friends at the pensionnat, partly because of their natural shyness and diffidence, partly because of their Protestant suspicion of all things Catholic and

their belief in the superiority of all things British. Charlotte Brontë was especially scathing in her comments on the Hegers' Belgian pupils, whose character she described to Ellen Nussey as "cold, selfish, animal and inferior" and whose principles she regarded as "rotten to the core." Nevertheless, Brontë's first year in Belgium was busy and enjoyable; in addition to her own schoolwork, she gave English lessons, visited the Taylor sisters and their cousins, the Dixons, explored art galleries and museums, and saw an exhibition of paintings at the Brussels Salon of 1842 which she was later to recall in an episode in *Villette*. Above all, she found herself drawn more and more strongly to Constantin Heger, an attraction carefully omitted by Mrs. Gaskell from her biography. Heger's dominant personality, his acute intelligence, his position as mentor and friend, all combined to arouse in Brontë an admiration for one whom she could regard as her master. Had she been younger, her feelings might have taken the form of a schoolgirl infatuation, quickly roused and quickly quenched; but at twenty-six she had deeper yearnings, desires which possibly she did not understand herself.

Toward the end of 1842 life in Brussels took on a darker shade. First, in September, came news of the death of William Weightman, Mr. Brontë's attractive young curate since 1839, with whom all the sisters had playfully flirted. An even greater shock was the sudden death of Martha Taylor, who died of cholera in October and was buried at the Protestant Cemetery outside Brussels; the tragedy impressed itself deeply in Charlotte Brontë's mind and would later be alluded to directly in *Shirley*, where Martha appears as Jessie Yorke. A final somber note was struck at the end of October by the death of Aunt Branwell. Charlotte and Emily immediately left for Haworth, taking with them a letter of condolence for Mr. Brontë from Constantin Heger, who expressed the hope that one of the girls, if not both, might be allowed to return.

Charlotte did return, at the end of January 1843; this time, however, she traveled alone (Emily had decided to stay in Haworth), experiencing difficulties much like those she later bestowed on Lucy Snowe, who makes a similar journey in *Villette*. Her second year in Brussels began well; she was warmly received by the Hegers and promoted to the position of salaried teacher. She gave English lessons to M. Heger and his brother-in-law and continued her own studies in German; she paid frequent visits to her English acquaintances, the Dixons and the Wheelwrights. But without Emily's companionship, and in the absence of Mary Taylor (now in Germany), Charlotte felt increasingly isolated. Her relations with Mme Heger were deteriorating; to Emily she complained of Madame's aversion to her and expressed the belief that she was being spied upon. Allowing for an element of exaggeration in Brontë's complaints, there is little doubt that Mme Heger had become more guarded in her exchanges with the little English teacher; though Brontë never made any avowal of an attachment to Constantin Heger, her feelings must have been quite apparent to the shrewd directress of the pensionnat, who probably sought ways of reducing Brontë's opportunities for social contact with her husband. Brontë found herself in an increasingly "Robinson-Crusoe-like condition," lamenting that M. Heger had "in a great measure withdrawn the light of his countenance." Thrown more and more upon her own resources, Charlotte Brontë withdrew into the childhood world of her imagination; to Branwell, the former partner of her fantasies, she spoke of recurring "as fanatically as ever to the old ideas, the old faces, and the old scenes in the world below." When the school holidays came in mid-August, the Hegers left on their vacation, the teachers and pupils went home, and Brontë was abandoned to her own devices until school resumed at the end of September. Her solitude bore heavily upon her, and she entered a state of nervous depression. The feelings of bitter frustration, loneliness, and

possibly guilt were too much for her; on 1 September she took the extraordinary step of confessing to a Catholic priest in Sainte Gudule, the collegiate church close to the rue d'Isabelle. Writing to Emily the next day, Charlotte described the incident in full and finally dismissed it as a "freak"; but its details remained clearly impressed upon her memory and provided her with an important scene in *Villette* ten years later.

By the end of the year her loneliness and homesickness had become too much for her, and on 1 January 1844 Brontë left Brussels for the last time. The strength of her feelings for M. Heger, however, was undiminished; the pain she suffered at parting from him was to last for the next two years, as she sought to maintain his friendship by correspondence. Some of her letters to Heger have survived; they were evidently torn up by the recipient, then reassembled by Madame, and now maintain a patchwork existence under glass at the British Library. They reflect a rising desperation in Brontë; in no sense are they love letters, yet they are unmistakably passionate in their pleas for some acknowledgment, some signal of recognition and regard. What Heger thought of all this is not known; there is no evidence that he felt anything but a kindly affection and concern for an apt and hardworking young pupil-teacher. In Brontë's eyes, however, Heger constituted an ideal: cultured, energetic, masterful (she addresses him in one letter as "mon maître"), and there is something of Heger in the heroes of all her mature novels, especially in the figure of Paul Emanuel in *Villette*.

At their parting, Heger had given Brontë a diploma attesting to her experience and qualifications; once back in Haworth, she hoped to make use of this in realizing the sisters' original plan of opening their own school. She set about seeking pupils and in July 1844 sent Ellen Nussey copies of a prospectus she had drawn up, describing "The Misses Brontë's Establishment for the Board and Education of a limited number of Young Ladies." She also wrote to a number of acquaintances to announce her intentions, on one occasion enclosing the diploma she had received from Heger. Her efforts proved fruitless; not one prospective pupil applied, and by the close of the year the plan had been abandoned.

With the failure of the school project, Charlotte Brontë's life seemed to have reached a point of stagnation. She no longer heard anything from Constantin Heger, although she continued writing to him until November 1845. Mary Taylor, her principal source of intellectual stimulation outside her own family, left for New Zealand in March 1845. Ellen Nussey remained always ready to offer friendship and comfort, but she was too limited and unimaginative to provide Brontë with an outlet for her deeper needs and concerns. To make matters worse, in July 1845 Branwell was dismissed from his post as tutor in the Robinson family of Thorp Green, accused of improper conduct toward his employer's wife, and came home to plague the family with his increasingly drunken and irrational behavior. Charlotte, once his closest companion, became bitterly critical of his "frantic folly" and dissipation; her disgust at his moral depravity would shortly find expression in *The Professor*, where her narrator William Crimsworth reflects on the spectacle of "a mind degraded by the practice of mean subterfuge, by the habit of perfidious deception, and a body depraved by the infectious influence of the vice-polluted soul."

Driven closer together by Branwell's progressive deterioration, Charlotte and her sisters now entered a phase of literary production from which their brother was excluded. Its beginnings are chronicled in Charlotte's Acton Bell prefixed to the 1850 edition of *Wuthering Heights and Agnes Grey*. In the autumn of 1845, Charlotte "accidentally lighted on a MS volume of verse" in Emily's handwriting and was

immediately convinced that the poems merited publication. After Emily's initial reluctance had been overcome, the Brontë sisters set out to realize their long-cherished dream of authorship. They made a small selection of their poems; then, with some of the small legacy left to each of them by Aunt Branwell, they paid the London firm of Aylott and Jones thirty-six pounds, ten shillings to meet the expenses of paper, printing, and advertising. The Brontës became the Bells: Currer (Charlotte), Ellis (Emily), and Acton (Anne). Male-sounding pseudonyms were preferred, as Charlotte explained in her "Biographical Notice," because "we had a vague impression that authoresses are liable to be looked on with prejudice; we had noticed how critics sometimes use for their chastisement the weapon of personality, and for their reward, a flattery, which is not true praise." *Poems by Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell* appeared in one volume at four shillings in May 1846; it received several friendly notices, but by June 1847 only two copies had been sold.

Lack of success in their first venture into print did not deter the sisters, however; even before the appearance of the *Poems*, they had already decided to try their hand at publishable fiction. In this they were doubtless encouraged by the enormous popularity of novels with the Victorian public. Thanks to such developments as part publication, cheap one-volume reprints, and subscription circulating libraries, a successful writer might now command a huge audience. The Brontë sisters were certainly impelled by the honorable motive of seeking critical applause, but undoubtedly they also hoped to turn their love of writing to good account and make some money by their pens. To this end each wrote a short novel: *Wuthering Heights* by Emily, *Agnes Grey* by Anne, and *The Professor* by Charlotte. Their intention was to have them published together as a three-volume work, the format imposed on most new fiction by the needs of the circulating libraries. Fair copies of the manuscripts were completed by the end of June 1846 (that of *The Professor* is dated 27 June) and sent to Henry Colburn on 4 July. However, finding an interested publisher proved much more difficult than had been the case with the *Poems*, since the sisters could not meet the costs of production themselves; over the next twelve months, the manuscripts suffered half a dozen rejections. Finally, in July 1847 the London firm of Thomas Cautley Newby agreed to publish *Wuthering Heights* and *Agnes Grey*, provided that the authors contributed fifty pounds toward the cost of production; but Newby flatly refused to include *The Professor*. The sisters accepted these harsh terms, and Charlotte was left to find a separate publisher for her own novel; her search proved fruitless, for though it was instrumental in leading her to the firm that would swiftly accept and publish *Jane Eyre*, *The Professor* never reached print during her lifetime.

The novel's lack of appeal for prospective publishers is partly attributable to its prosaic subject matter and lack of sensational incident; indeed, it was the publisher's objections on this score that led Brontë in her next work (*Jane Eyre*) to the mode of romantic melodrama. *The Professor* suffers also from awkwardness in construction and in the handling of plot: the clumsy opening in epistolary form (a stratagem dropped after the first chapter), the loose arrangement of episodes, the lack of any real suspense, and the anticlimactic ending all make the story seem flat and unexciting. Nevertheless, the book does have real power in its delineation of character and in its exploration of the individual's struggle to find emotional fulfillment despite socially repressive circumstances.

The Professor's effectiveness in depicting strong emotions derives largely from its autobiographical origins; in her portrayal of the love between teacher and pupil in a

Belgian girls' school, Brontë drew heavily on her recent experiences in Brussels. She sought to disguise this personal element by making her narrator-protagonist a man, a device she had frequently employed in her Angrian tales; and she revived the Angrian motif of enmity between two brothers, the elder, hardheaded and ambitious, the younger, cultured and sensitive. Like most Brontë protagonists, William Crimsworth is an orphan, in this case the ward of an aristocratic family. He begins his career by rejecting the status of dependent and chooses to enter a voluntary servitude as clerk to his elder brother Edward, a blunt and morose mill owner. William's independent nature cannot bear the yoke of his brother's tyranny, however, and he strikes out afresh, becoming a teacher in a boys' school in Brussels. This first part of the narrative is an uneasy mixture of social comedy and melodrama, the tone strained and uncertain; but Brontë succeeds in establishing William as a quirky yet intelligent character, chafing under his bondage to inferior minds and eager to assert his individuality. A related concern is the connection between sexual power and social identity, a theme explored in all of Brontë's subsequent novels; Crimsworth is made painfully conscious that as "a dependant amongst wealthy strangers" he is unattractive to the band of young women who cluster around his prosperous brother. Though there is a self-pitying tone to William's reflections, his emotional vulnerability and sense of failure at this stage are necessary elements in his development; as the novel progresses, he acquires greater confidence and maturity in his relationships with women, until he is ready to take on the dominant role as a lover.

A factor in William's growth is his friendship with the radical and outspoken manufacturer Hunsden Yorke Hunsden, a precursor of Hiram Yorke in *Shirley*. Hunsden, who encourages William to rebel against Edward, embodies the force of instinctual feeling; this makes him both attractive and dangerous. His association with potentially anarchic impulses is signified by recurring allusions to a demonic element in his nature, and at the end of the novel the mature Crimsworth sees Hunsden's influence as a threat to his son Victor's moral education. The portrait of Hunsden creates some unresolved ambiguities: he is both a capitalist and a critic of capitalism, a cynic and a sentimentalist. He is a friend to Crimsworth, yet subtly undermines the latter's sense of security and self-esteem. Potentially Hunsden is an interestingly complex character, but he lacks the development necessary to make his idiosyncrasies seem wholly credible.

Once the narrative shifts from England to Belgium, Charlotte Brontë demonstrates much firmer control of her material. The vague industrial setting of a Yorkshire mill town is replaced by the precise topography of Brussels; the melodramatic stereotypes of the early chapters give way to characters with a depth and vividness owing much to real life. Zoraïde Reuter, the manipulative directress of the girls' school where Crimsworth is eventually hired to give English lessons, is partly modeled on Mme Heger in her cool efficiency. Through her, and through his encounters with some of her pupils, Crimsworth discovers the superficiality and duplicity of the Catholic system of education. Although Brontë sometimes invites the reader to laugh at her narrator's pompousness or mild vanity, Crimsworth is generally the mouthpiece for her own views; and nowhere is this more evident than in his contemptuous accounts of "Romish wizardcraft" and its victims, the Belgian schoolgirls, who are deceitful, shallow, and "mentally depraved." In making her hero such a bluff proponent of British Protestantism, Brontë intended no irony; she herself had spoken critically of Roman "mummers" in letters from Brussels in 1842-1843. Nor would her readers have taken exception to such denunciations; despite the political freedom enjoyed by English

Catholics since the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829, Victorian Englishmen regarded Catholics with an undiminished suspicion that was intensified by the Tractarian controversies of the 1830s and 1840s which threatened the hegemony of the Anglican church.

Related to the theme of Catholic treachery is Mlle Reuter's role as seductress and temptress in a struggle with Crimsworth for sexual dominance. Though she is engaged to M. Pelet (Crimsworth's employer at the boys' school) she flirts with the young Englishman, who is saved from imminent folly only by accidentally overhearing her in conversation with Pelet. Henceforth he treats her with a haughty disdain worthy of a Zamorna, which paradoxically serves to make him seem more fascinating in the directress's eyes. This curious turn in their relationship is seen by Crimsworth as further evidence of the degeneration fostered by a despotic religious system; because Zoraide herself lives by the values of a spiritual tyranny, she respects the manifestation of authority in others. Her new submissiveness arouses Crimsworth to a pleasurable sense of his own power; once he has won recognition of his masculine strength, however, he turns his back on such "low gratification" in favor of the higher charms offered by his Anglo-Swiss pupil Frances Henri.

The comedy of Crimsworth's entanglement with Zoraide Reuter now gives way to a much more earnest study of a relationship based on intellectual as well as emotional compatibility. There are obvious parallels between Crimsworth's situation in England and Frances's sufferings at the Brussels pensionnat, emphasizing the link between inferior social status and the enforced repression of feeling. Orphaned, poor, and (after her aunt's death) utterly alone, Frances draws Crimsworth's interest by her meekly deferential manner, behind which he perceives flashes of warmth and proud defiance. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that, in her depiction of this relationship, Charlotte Brontë was expressing some of her fantasies about Constantin Heger, her "maître" in Brussels. Through Frances Henri's suffering, and her eventual triumph over the schemes of Mlle Reuter, Brontë could play out a dream of what might have been; here, true merit might defeat hypocrisy, and the professor clasp his pupil in a warm embrace. Brontë's immersion in the hopes and longings of her principal characters gives conviction to her portrayal of their feelings, but the focus on romantic love costs the novel much of its earlier bite. Through Frances, Brontë adumbrates some of her concerns about the plight of women without money or connections; however, as an idealized embodiment of the author's own yearnings, Frances lacks the depth and complexity needed to carry the burden of such concerns effectively.

Several years after the composition of *The Professor*, when she had won fame as the author of *Jane Eyre* and *Shirley*, Charlotte Brontë again sought its publication and wrote a preface outlining her original intentions. She had sought to create a hero who "should work his way through life as I had seen living men work theirs--that he should never get a shilling he had not earned--that no sudden turns should lift him in a moment to wealth and high station.... As Adam's son he should share Adam's doom, and drain throughout life a mixed and moderate cup of enjoyment." That *The Professor* is sometimes slow, even dull, is perhaps the inevitable consequence of the author's rejection of the sensational in fiction; but her attempt to view life as unromantically as possible, and to focus on the pains and pleasures of a recognizably ordinary life, places Charlotte Brontë at the forefront of developments in modern literary realism.

Even while *The Professor* was going its fruitless round of the publishers, Charlotte was occupied with her next story. In August 1846 she accompanied her father to

Manchester, where he underwent an operation for cataracts; and during his convalescence she began *Jane Eyre*. The work continued in Haworth, sometimes with great intensity (as when she wrote the chapters on Thornfield), and aided by critical counsel from Emily and Anne. The book was in its final stages when, on 15 July 1847, the manuscript of *The Professor*, now divorced from its former companions, arrived at the firm of Smith, Elder in London. It was seen by the firm's reader, William Smith Williams, a sensitive and literate man who was to become a close friend of Brontë's. Williams recognized the book's power, but doubted its success as a publication; after consulting with George Smith, he wrote to Brontë, declining *The Professor* but inviting the author to submit a work that might be published in three volumes. Maintaining her pseudonym of Currer Bell, Brontë sent off the manuscript of *Jane Eyre* on 24 August, five days after completing the fair copy. The book was accepted at once; within a month Brontë was correcting proofs; and on 19 October 1847, *Jane Eyre: An Autobiography*, "edited by Currer Bell," was published in three volumes at thirty-one shillings, sixpence.

The book won immediate and widespread acclaim. The *Times* called it "a remarkable production," a tale that "stand[s] boldly out from the mass." The *Edinburgh Review* saw it as "a book of singular fascination," and *Fraser's Magazine* urged its readers to "lose not a day in sending for it." Within three months the novel went into a second edition, and a third appeared in April 1848: no small achievement for a three-volume novel by a wholly unknown author. One of its first readers was the novelist Thackeray, who had been sent a copy by William Smith Williams; "exceedingly moved & pleased" by the novel, Thackeray asked Williams to convey his thanks to the author. Touched by this response, Brontë dedicated the second edition to Thackeray and added a preface expressing her admiration for the author of *Vanity Fair* (1848), "the first social regenerator of the day."

In this chorus of praise, there were some discordant notes. The *Christian Remembrancer* for April 1848 commented unfavorably on the "extravagant panegyric" of the preface to the second edition, denounced the novel's "moral Jacobinism," and expressed displeasure at the author's attacks on Christian practice. Even more condemnatory was the unsigned notice in the *Quarterly Review* for December 1848, written by Elizabeth Rigby (soon to become Lady Eastlake). *Jane Eyre* is here described as "the personification of an unregenerate and undisciplined spirit," exerting the moral strength of "a mere heathen mind which is a law unto itself." The novel is accused of being "pre-eminently an anti-Christian composition," guilty of "a murmuring against the comforts of the rich and against the privations of the poor, which, as far as each individual is concerned, is a murmuring against God's appointment." The prevailing tone, one of "ungodly discontent," allies the novel in the reviewer's opinion to the cast of mind and thought "which has overthrown authority and violated every code human and divine abroad, and fostered Chartism and rebellion at home...."

The plot of *Jane Eyre* might well disturb those to whom the divisions of social rank were sacred, since it follows the progress of a poor orphan from a loveless and humiliating dependence to happiness and wealth as an heiress and the wife of her former employer. Jane is an outcast, a rebel who triumphs over the forces of social convention expressed through caste, religion, and sexual tradition. Victorian readers were disturbed by the novel's suggestion that women need not always be passive or submissive, and by its treatment of love, which, by contemporary standards, seemed coarse and offensive. The supremacy of romantic love is an ancient theme in literature,

but in *Jane Eyre* it was presented with a frankness and intensity new to English fiction. That intensity is made possible by Brontë's choice of a first-person narrator. Jane Eyre dominates her world, which exists only as it impinges on her consciousness; every action is filtered through the medium of her sensibility, every character lives only as an actor in the drama of her life. An outline of the plot might suggest that Brontë's novel is little more than a creaky melodrama peopled by crude caricatures, but such is the authority, the conviction with which Jane tells her story that the reader is swept along by the narrative, undisturbed by improbabilities of character or plot.

One version of the novel's origin, related by Mrs. Gaskell, is that during a discussion with her sisters about the qualities necessary in a protagonist, Charlotte Brontë declared that she would show them "a heroine as plain and as small as myself, who shall be as interesting as any of yours." Such an intention is evident in the introductory chapters of *Jane Eyre*, where the ten-year-old Jane is seen as a prickly and unappealing child. She is an outsider, excluded by her Aunt Reed from the domestic circle around the hearth (a recurring image in the novel), and markedly different from her handsome but unpleasant cousins. She lacks their external attractiveness and confident air and is looked on with contempt even by the servants; only the solitary world of books and the imagination offers her any comfort, while her yearning for love must satisfy itself with an old doll. Yet the reader is soon made conscious of Jane's inner strength; her fierce assertion of self against the Reeds' cruelty and injustice intimidates even her aunt. Charlotte Brontë conveys very powerfully the child's sense of alienation, helplessness, and anger in the face of adult oppression. Jane's rebellion at Gateshead against the tyranny of the Reeds is the first step in her progress toward spiritual freedom; at the same time, the wretchedness she feels after her violent outburst against Mrs. Reed reveals the danger of giving "uncontrolled play" to passionate feelings. The destructive potential of passion, imaged in chapter four as a fiery heath left "black and blasted," is to become a major theme in the Thornfield section of the novel.

In depicting Jane's search for the warmth and security of familial love, Charlotte Brontë undoubtedly endowed her heroine with some of her own yearnings; and the autobiographical strain is even more evident in the chapters of *Jane Eyre* describing Lowood Institution, a thinly veiled reminiscence of life at the Clergy Daughters' School at Cowan Bridge. Mr. Brocklehurst, the "black marble clergyman," conveys the tone of William Carus Wilson's evangelical fervor in his speech, but the element of hypocrisy in Brocklehurst's sermonizing probably owes more to Charlotte Brontë's sense of justice than to the truth about Carus Wilson. Unlike his fictional counterpart, Carus Wilson had the welfare of his pupils at heart, but he lacked administrative experience, and his school was plagued in its early days by financial difficulties. Mrs. Gaskell's description of the Clergy Daughters' School and its director, in the first edition of *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*, seems to confirm the picture given in *Jane Eyre*; but it should be remembered that she had obtained much of her information from Brontë herself, before the latter's death. Under the threat of legal proceedings by Carus Wilson's family (as well as by Branwell's former employer, Mrs. Robinson, now Lady Scott), Mrs. Gaskell made extensive revisions for the third edition of the biography and presented Carus Wilson in a less unfavorable light.

Mrs. Gaskell did not, however, soften her account of the cruel treatment suffered by Charlotte's eldest sister, Maria, at the hands of one of Carus Wilson's teachers. Maria was Brontë's model for the character of Helen Burns, Jane Eyre's first friend at

Lowood, who achieves almost saintly stature by her meekness and patient endurance of hardship, and who teaches Jane the importance of Christian love and humility. Charlotte Brontë obviously intended to pay tribute to the qualities of her dead sister, but she was artist enough not to be satisfied with a simple portrait from life; Helen Burns teaches Jane the virtues of patience and forgiveness, but her spiritual ardor and otherworldly faith are too intense for one like Jane, whose needs and desires are firmly rooted in this world, and who recoils from the "unfathomed gulf" of heaven and hell.

At eighteen, Jane leaves Lowood for "a new servitude," to become a governess at Thornfield Hall. Here the novel enters the realm of romance; the realism of character and setting which marks the descriptions of life at Gateshead and Lowood gives way to the mode and materials of Gothic melodrama, a vein that Charlotte and Branwell had mined in their Angrian chronicles. Social concerns are not wholly absent from Thornfield; in her account of Rochester's house party, Charlotte Brontë treats the empty pretensions of the English upper class with the same brand of bitter satire that she directs against Mr. Brocklehurst's religious hypocrisy. For the most part, however, the narrative moves on to a plane where dreams, visions, and presentiments have the force of waking reality: the world of cruel teachers and burned breakfasts gives way to one of mystery, terror, and sudden violence. The master of Thornfield is Edward Fairfax Rochester; like his predecessor, Zamorna, he is a compound of the Gothic villain and the Byronic hero: moody, passionate, overpoweringly attractive to women, burdened by a guilty past. Thornfield itself, with its crenellated front, its dark corridors, its hidden secret on the third story, becomes an English version of the Gothic castle, ruled by a tyrant and haunted by specters. What saves this section of *Jane Eyre* from descending to the level of adolescent fantasy and sensational melodrama is Brontë's concentration on the intensity of Jane's feelings and her use of such conventional materials to reflect and underscore her heroine's emotional turmoil. In the dark confines of Thornfield, Jane's troubled and passionate nature can find a release denied her in the "real" world; Rochester's brooding sexuality offers her the possibility of realizing desires normally forbidden expression. The danger that Jane runs in giving way to such feelings is expressed in language heavily charged with romantic symbolism; images of darkness, storm, and ruin counterpoint the description of the lovers' rising passions, and when Jane accepts Rochester's proposal, Nature herself protests, reminding the reader of the groans and "signs of woe" with which Nature greets the fall of mankind in Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667). When Jane finally discovers Rochester's secret, the insane wife he has kept hidden at Thornfield for ten years, she is confronted by a frightening projection of one extreme of her own nature; Bertha Rochester is what Jane might have become: a creature governed by unbridled, irrational passions, stripped of human identity.

The visionary and nightmare qualities of these chapters, strongly suggestive to post-Freudian readers of a disturbed libido, give way to more conventional moral concerns, as Jane rejects Rochester's plea that she live with him as his mistress and flees Thornfield in obedience to the dictates of conscience and self-respect. Here--despite the accusations of the *Quarterly Review*--the novel takes on a distinctly Christian quality, albeit in a somewhat unorthodox mingling of traditional Protestant values and romantic supernaturalism. Jane is seen as a suffering sinner who, like Christian in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678), must struggle through the world beset by trials and temptations in search of grace. At moments of intense spiritual crisis she is guided by a benevolent Providence, first manifested in the vision of her mother which tells her

to "flee temptation," then sensed as "the might and strength of God" that comes to her rescue in her deepest despair and leads her through the marsh to her cousins' house. Though modern critics, often eager to see in Jane a prototype of the modern liberated woman, rightly emphasize her spirit of independence and self-reliance, it should also be recognized that in her quest for earthly happiness Jane is guided by a simple faith that gives her the inner strength to continue her search. Conviction of the validity of her own feelings is made possible by an unwavering belief in God--not the Calvinistic deity of Mr. Brocklehurst but a loving God expressed in and through nature.

The pattern of trial, temptation, and providential intervention established in the Thornfield episode and echoed in Jane's account of her subsequent wandering on the moors is repeated in the course of her relationship with her cousin, St. John Rivers. Rochester had threatened to destroy Jane's moral nature; St. John, whose powerful will and spiritual ambition almost overwhelm Jane's sense of self, poses an equally serious threat to the passions that give her life. Modeled in part upon Henry Martyn, the devout missionary whom Mr. Brontë had known at Cambridge and who had done much work in India, St. John displays an ardent and eloquent Evangelicalism that is unmistakably sincere. Yet in his pride and ambition he is less than perfect; and the struggle between his sensual nature and his spiritual zeal gives him enough humanity to make him more than just a mechanical foil to Rochester.

Jane is saved from surrendering her will to St. John's only by another providential intervention, this time in the form of Rochester's voice calling to her from afar. Her return to Rochester and their subsequent marriage (made possible by Bertha's fiery demise) is a satisfying conclusion to the story of their troubled love; yet there is a subdued, even anticlimactic quality about the novel's final chapters, perhaps because both Jane and Rochester have lost the spirit of willful defiance that is the basis of their appeal. So much of *Jane Eyre* is pervaded by the language and ideas of romanticism, especially in its emphasis on spiritual rebellion against a corrupt society, that Rochester's retributive maiming and his belated submission to divine law may seem a rather weak surrender to conventional morality. That Jane should now settle into a life of quiet middle-class domesticity also seems a renunciation of the passionate idealism that has hitherto marked her nature. Such an ending, however, reflects a sober recognition that life cannot always be lived at fever pitch. Only those who are prepared to turn their backs on the claims of nature can devote their lives to the unswerving pursuit of an ideal; and significantly the novel's closing paragraphs are concerned with the missionary achievements of St. John Rivers, doomed, like his real-life counterpart Henry Martyn, to an early death in the service of his God.

For *Jane Eyre*, Charlotte Brontë received £500: for a first novel, a princely amount indeed, especially in comparison to the terms obtained from T. C. Newby by Emily and Anne, whose advance of £50 toward the cost of production was never refunded. Anne's next novel, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, was also published by Newby; at its appearance in June 1848, Newby sought to profit from the success of *Jane Eyre* by suggesting to an American publisher that *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* was written by the same author as *Jane Eyre*--that in fact Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell were the pseudonyms of a single author. This alarmed Smith, Elder, who had already promised Currer Bell's next work to the New York firm of Harper, and who now asked for assurances that Currer Bell was not acting in bad faith. Accordingly, on a wet evening in July 1848, Charlotte and Anne walked across the moors to Keighley, caught the night train to Leeds, and presented themselves next morning in London to an

astonished George Smith, dispelling any doubts the publisher might have had about their separate identities.

Thus began a relationship that was to last until Charlotte Brontë's death seven years later. When they first met, George Smith was twenty-four years old, eight years Brontë's junior, an attractive and energetic young businessman with an open and generous disposition. He and his widowed mother formed a strong attachment to Brontë; they shepherded her around London during her several visits to the capital, introduced her to the literary lions of the day, and on one occasion took her on a brief tour of Scotland. That there was a kind of playful flirtation between them is clear from the tone of Brontë's letters to Smith over the years: there is a lightheartedness, a vivaciousness not apparent in her other correspondence. But Brontë was under no illusion that their friendship might ripen into something deeper: as she told Ellen Nussey in June 1850, "I believe that George and I understand each other very well, and respect each other very sincerely. We both know the wide breach time has made between us; we do not embarrass each other, or very rarely, my six or eight years of seniority, to say nothing of lack of all pretension to beauty, etc., are a perfect safeguard." George Smith was later to tell Mrs. Humphry Ward that he "never could have loved any woman who had not some charm or grace of person, and Charlotte Brontë had none.... But I believe that my mother was at one time rather alarmed...."

George Smith was anxious to follow up the success of *Jane Eyre* with another work by Currer Bell, and in December 1847 W. S. Williams suggested that Brontë write a novel for serial publication. She rejected this proposal but revealed that she was already planning a new three-volume novel based on a reworking of the materials she had used in *The Professor*. She made several attempts to begin this new work; one such commencement survives in the undated and untitled manuscript fragment known as "John Henry" or "The Moores," which describes the relationship between an overbearing mill owner and his intelligent, sensitive younger brother. The characters and framework of this story are strongly reminiscent of *The Professor*, but other elements, such as the characters' names and the younger brother's disdain for superiority based on rank or wealth, point toward *Shirley*. That novel began to take shape early in 1848, and Brontë made such steady progress that the first volume and part of the second were completed before the end of September. Then came a series of tragedies which ended all joy in composition and might well have destroyed the creative impulse in one less strong than Charlotte Brontë.

First, on 24 September 1848, came the death of Branwell. Though he had been declining for a long time, his death still came as a heavy blow to his family. Charlotte, who had been the most angry and embittered at his degenerate conduct, was the one who felt his loss the most deeply, and for several weeks after the funeral she was prostrated by grief and illness. This was succeeded by an even severer shock: Emily fell prey to consumption, and after a brief but heroic struggle, she died on 19 December 1848. More anguish was to follow; even before Emily's death, Anne's health had begun to deteriorate, and now she too suffered a rapid decline. In May 1849 Charlotte and Ellen Nussey took her to Scarborough in the hope that fresh sea air might bring some improvement, but she died there on 28 May, three days after their arrival.

Now, at thirty-three, Charlotte was the sole survivor of the six Brontë children. Grief and solitude weighed heavily upon her, but she pressed on with *Shirley*, finding in work an anodyne for her suffering; as she told William Smith Williams after the novel's

completion, "the occupation of writing it has been a boon to me. It took me out of dark and desolate reality into an unreal but happier region." The manuscript of *Shirley* was finished by the end of August 1849. Before sending it off to Smith, Elder, Brontë prepared a lengthy preface in which Currer Bell took to task the hostile reviewer of *Jane Eyre* in the *Quarterly Review*. The peevish tone and somewhat laborious ironies of the intended preface did not please George Smith, and when *Shirley: A Tale* was published in three volumes on 26 October 1849, no preface was included. However, Brontë's angry scorn of the *Quarterly Review* had already found release in the text itself: in Mrs. Pryor's account of her employment as a governess in the Hardman family, the unpleasant Hardmans are made to condemn themselves in words taken verbatim from Elizabeth Rigby's attack on *Jane Eyre*.

In that novel, Brontë had focused on the personal history and emotional experience of an individual; in *Shirley*, she sought to diffuse the interest among a number of characters and to bring them into contact with the public world of politics and social conflict. The novel is set in the West Riding of Yorkshire during the troubled years of 1811-1812, when the economic hardships ensuing from the war with France, complicated by an embargo on trade with America and the introduction of new machinery, led to massive unemployment and widespread rioting in the wool-producing districts. Much of the novel's action centers on Robert Moore, a local mill owner who is threatened on one hand by bankruptcy and on the other by Luddite machinebreakers. With the help of the militia, he routs a force of workers who had set out to destroy his mill; subsequently, however, he is shot by a religious fanatic and seriously wounded. Alongside this plot of industrial conflict is developed the story of Caroline Helstone, Moore's cousin, and her friendship with Shirley Keeldar, a spirited young heiress and landowner. Caroline, who lives with her guardian, a stern Tory clergyman, falls in love with Moore, but, believing that she has lost him to Shirley, enters into a dangerous decline. She is saved from death by the care of Mrs. Pryor, Shirley's elderly companion, who reveals herself to be Caroline's long-lost mother. Shirley herself is in love with Louis Moore, Robert's brother and her former tutor; despite opposition from class-conscious relatives, Shirley encourages Louis's attentions, and at the novel's conclusion they are married. Caroline and Robert are also united, the latter having recovered from his wound and acknowledged his love for his devoted cousin.

Brontë's choice of a subject so different from that of *Jane Eyre* was governed in part by her response to criticism of that novel's romantic excesses. G. H. Lewes in particular, writing in *Fraser's Magazine*, had mingled praise for the novel's strength of characterization and narrative power with an admonition about the dangers of melodrama. The opening of *Shirley*, with its warning to the reader that he should expect, not romance, but "something unromantic as Monday morning" is clearly an answer to that charge and a declaration of solemn intent, though couched in such ironic terms as to make it clear that the author is also mocking her critics. There is certainly a homely realism in much of the first volume, notably in the portraits of the three curates and of the house-proud Hortense Moore, characters drawn with a comic touch that is rare in Brontë's adult fiction. There is no comedy, however, in her description of the hardships of the Yorkshire unemployed, or in her accounts of the bitter confrontations of master and men. Her choice of this grim subject may have been inspired by the Chartist agitation that had troubled England for a decade, reaching its climax with a massive demonstration in London in April 1848. That Brontë should have turned to a historical parallel, the Luddite disturbances, to explore the "Condition of

England" question reflects her natural reluctance to become involved in contemporary political controversy; as she told Williams in April 1848, "political partizanship is what I would ever wish to avoid as much as religious bigotry."

Charlotte Brontë took pains to present an accurate picture of the Luddite uprisings in the West Riding. She doubtless recalled stories about this period of Yorkshire history told by Miss Wooler at Roe Head, and by her father, who had known some of the principal antagonists during the time of his curacy at Hartshead-cum-Clifton. To supplement such anecdotal sources, Brontë studied the files of the Leeds *Mercury* for 1811-1813, making copies of some of its reports on Luddite activities. The result in *Shirley* is an authentic recreation of the period in which local events are merged with issues of national policy, and fiction is expertly blended with historical fact. The climax of the novel's industrial theme, the attack on Robert Moore's mill, is a reworking of a famous incident in April 1812, when a band of Luddites stormed William Cartwright's mill at Rawfolds, near Hartshead, and suffered a heavy defeat; the assault and its consequences were prominently reported in the Leeds *Mercury*. *Shirley* is not simply fictionalized history, however; Brontë's interest lies primarily in her characters and their relationships, and she adapts or changes historical detail to suit the needs of her narrative. Her treatment of history is also colored to some extent by her Tory partialities: she presents the plight of the workers sympathetically, but it is plain that she regards their cause as mistaken, their leaders as rabble-rousers and troublemakers. At the same time, she is critical of the callousness and narrow self-interest of the manufacturers, who exploit the poor with little regard for their misery. The plot of *Shirley* deals in part with the reeducation and rehabilitation of the mill owner Robert Moore, whose contact with the suffering he has helped to create teaches him to value men more than machines. In this respect the novel offers an oblique comment on the need for more tolerant attitudes on the part of the governing class in the England of 1848.

The theme of industrial conflict is interwoven with the stories of Caroline and Shirley, through whom Brontë explores another important social issue: the failure of Victorian society to give women the kinds of opportunities afforded to men to develop their abilities, realize their potential, and exercise some control over their lives. Not unlike the factory workers, women are exploited, their needs ignored, their roles strictly defined by male authority. Shirley, by virtue of her wealth and social station, can successfully challenge this domination, much to the anger and frustration of most of the men she encounters; Caroline, however, poor and unconnected, has few choices: the role of genteel spinster (a forbidding fate, as reflected in the lives of Miss Mann and Miss Ainley), or the servitude of the governess-trade described with bitter restraint by Mrs. Pryor. Rescue ultimately comes in the only form possible for a woman in Caroline's position: marriage. Yet as Brontë makes clear in a long (and somewhat uncharacteristic) reflection by Caroline in volume two, chapter eleven, such salvation does not come to all; and the struggle for success in an overstocked "matrimonial market" all too often leads women into degrading and humiliating competition, making them objects of scorn and ridicule to men. The solution is to give single women "better chances of interesting and profitable occupation than they possess now" and to cultivate girls' minds, not keep them "narrow and fettered." Brontë's feminism lacks the political dimension that marked the growth of the women's movement later in the century, but her call for women's emancipation from domestic slavery puts her at the forefront of that movement and gives *Shirley* added force and interest.

Few of the book's early reviewers, however, found much to praise in Brontë's attempt to branch out into realms of social comment. Only Eugène Forcade, writing in the *Revue des deux mondes* (15 November 1849), voiced approval of the novel's assertion of "moral liberty, the spirit of rebelliousness, the impulses of revolt against certain social conventions," noting that its subtitle might well have been "On the Condition of Women in the English Middle Class." For the most part, critical responses reflected disappointment that *Shirley* was not cast in the same mold as *Jane Eyre*. Reviewers were bored by the characters' lengthy conversations, or offended by the aggressive and unwomanly conduct of the eponymous heroine. While acknowledging the author's descriptive powers, they found the plot slow-moving, the chief male characters unconvincing. There is some basis for such complaints. The narrative lacks focus and unity, in large part because of the almost equal emphasis given to the two heroines and the course of their respective love affairs. The belated introduction of Shirley, who does not appear until the eleventh chapter, gives an awkward wrench to the plot, which has hitherto centered on the relationship between Caroline and Robert. The character of Shirley herself is drawn with mixed success: though she has an appealing liveliness and intellectual vigor, her attractions seem somewhat brittle, and her love for the wooden and uninteresting figure of Louis Moore belies all the positive aspects of her nature. From the account given by Mrs. Gaskell, it is known that Brontë intended, through Shirley, to portray her sister Emily as she might have been had she lived. Undoubtedly Shirley has some of Emily's characteristics--her love of nature, her stoicism, her almost mystical apprehension of experience; but Emily did not have Shirley's dazzling beauty, her aggressive wit and charm, or her ability to dominate all around her. It is likely, rather, that some aspects of Emily's character were grafted onto the portrait of Shirley as the novel was being written; the first volume had been completed before Emily's death in December 1848, and it is possible that when she returned to the novel's composition, Charlotte modified her original conception to include Emily's qualities in the portrayal of Shirley as a kind of posthumous tribute. *Shirley* was an extremely ambitious effort by a young novelist eager to win recognition as a serious writer. It may lack the concentration, the driving force of a single vision that gives *Jane Eyre* its power; but in its treatment of complex social issues and its panoramic study of a turbulent period of English history, *Shirley* ranks with novels like Disraeli's *Sybil* (1845), Mrs. Gaskell's *Mary Barton* (1848), or Dickens's *Hard Times* (1854) as a significant contribution to the Victorian debate about the goals and values of industrial capitalism.

Between the publication of *Shirley* in October 1849 and the appearance of *Villette* in January 1853, Charlotte Brontë's life was marked by loneliness, depression, and recurring illness. She occupied herself with household affairs and the care of her father, but the sense of loss weighed heavily upon her, renewed daily by all the associations of the parsonage and the surrounding moors. She found some relief, and an outlet for her creative energies, in editing her sisters' literary remains. At Smith, Elder's suggestion she prepared an edition of *Wuthering Heights* and *Agnes Grey*, together with selections from her sisters' poems. The book was published in one volume at six shillings in December 1850, with a "Biographical Notice" and other prefatory materials by Charlotte which gave the reading public its first glimpse into the lives of the Brontës, as well as dispelling the still-current notion that all their works had been the production of one person. Brontë also emended the text of *Wuthering Heights*, correcting the many errors introduced by its first publisher, T. C. Newby, softening the harsh and incomprehensible dialect of Joseph, and altering the staccato

paragraphing to create a greater smoothness of effect. Modern critics have taken her to task for these textual changes; but her introductory comments about Emily's character and about *Wuthering Heights* itself are perceptive and intelligent.

Brontë's widening circle of acquaintances, the result of her literary fame, afforded another source of distraction from her grief. She paid several visits to the Smiths in London and found herself, much to her dislike, the center of eager curiosity and attention. She met Thackeray, for whom her earlier admiration was cooled somewhat by his worldliness and evident enjoyment of fashionable society. She was introduced to G. H. Lewes, with whom she had corresponded since the publication of *Jane Eyre*, and was taken by his remarkable likeness in features to her sister Emily. She also struck up a friendship with Harriet Martineau and became her guest at Ambleside in December 1850; in Miss Martineau's company she met Matthew Arnold, who displeased her by his affected manner and "seeming foppery." In August 1850, staying at Windermere with Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth and his wife, Brontë met her future biographer, Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell, and was at once drawn to this warmhearted and sympathetic woman, telling her much that was subsequently to be incorporated into *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*. The most eventful of Brontë's excursions from Haworth was her trip to London at the end of May 1851. Staying as usual at the Smiths', she was taken on numerous outings. She attended four of Thackeray's six lectures on the English humorists; met Richard Monckton Milnes (the future biographer of Keats) and the eminent Scottish scientist Sir David Brewster; breakfasted with the poet Samuel Rogers; and paid five visits to the Crystal Palace, home of the Great Exhibition which had opened on 1 May 1851. In George Smith's company, she attended two performances by the great French tragedienne Rachel, whose acting made her "shudder to the marrow of my bones: in her some fiend has certainly taken up an incarnate home." Smith also indulged her taste for phrenology, the pseudoscience of determining character by examining the conformation of the skull, to which Brontë makes frequent reference in her novels: they visited a Dr. J. P. Browne, whose phrenological study of "Miss Fraser" (her pseudonym on this occasion) resulted in a surprisingly accurate picture of Brontë's character.

Soon after her return to Haworth, Brontë began work on her new novel. The task proved difficult, partly because she could not free herself from the depression that grew out of her solitude. Now thirty-five years old, she saw no prospect of an end to her spinsterhood. For a short time she had received the attentions of James Taylor, George Smith's manager in Cornhill; but he struck her as lacking in intellect and good breeding, and any possibility of a union between them evaporated when Taylor left England in May 1851 to act as Smith's agent in India. Despite the blank prospect that opened before her, Brontë struggled on with her writing; and by the spring of 1852 her creative powers had returned with much of their old strength. After preparing a list of changes and corrections for the new one-volume edition of *Shirley* in March, she worked steadily on *Villette*, sending Smith the last volume in November. A temporary difficulty had been created by her father's wish that the book end happily; Mrs. Gaskell relates that Mr. Brontë "disliked novels which left a melancholy impression upon the mind." Charlotte would not alter her plan of having Paul Emanuel drown at sea; however, notes Mrs. Gaskell, she sought "so to veil the fate in oracular words, as to leave it to the character and discernment of her readers to interpret her meaning." Of greater concern to Brontë was the book's reception by her publisher, not least because she feared that George Smith might take offense at the use she had made of him and his mother in her depiction of the Brettons. She was conscious, too, that the book

lacked "public interest" and touched on nothing topical or exciting. Her anxieties were increased by Smith's criticism of the shift in interest from John Graham Bretton to Paul Emanuel in the third volume. Smith seemed reluctant to proceed with the novel's printing; so, unable to bear any further delays or uncertainties, Brontë went up to London to see him. Her visit had the desired effect: whatever objections Smith might have had were overcome, the printing went ahead, and on 28 January 1853 *Villette*, by Currer Bell, made its appearance in the familiar three-volume format at thirty-one shillings, sixpence.

With *Villette* Brontë returned to the autobiographical mode which had given *Jane Eyre* such coherence and conviction despite the implausibility of its plot. This time, however, she avoided an uncritical identification with her heroine: Lucy Snowe embodies much of Brontë's own experience and outlook, and in many respects is a projection of her creator's inner self, but the novel is not simply a fictionalized expression of personal feelings or the enactment of Brontë's secret dreams and fantasies. Despite its obvious connection with the writer's life in Brussels, *Villette* is imbued with a critical irony from which even its narrator is not exempt.

An outline of the plot can scarcely convey the complexity or intensity of the emotional struggles it dramatizes. The reader first meets the heroine, Lucy Snowe, as a fourteen-year-old girl in the household of her godmother, Louisa Bretton, a widow with a sixteen-year-old son, John Graham Bretton. Lucy is joined by little Paulina Home, whose mother has recently died and whose father is going abroad to secure his business affairs. The elfin Polly attaches herself to John Graham, who treats her with an appropriately adolescent mixture of amusement and indifference. Forced by circumstances to support herself, Lucy takes employment as companion to a elderly invalid, Miss Marchmont, whose history of a love frustrated by fate prefigures Lucy's own subsequent experience. At Miss Marchmont's death, Lucy travels to Villette, capital of Labassecour ("little town" and "the farmyard": Brontë's ironic names for Brussels and Belgium); here she becomes a teacher at the Pensionnat de Demoiselles owned by Mme Beck. In Villette Lucy meets the Brettons again; John Graham, now ten years older, is a practicing physician for whom the scheming Mme Beck is evidently setting her cap. He seems to encourage Madame's advances, while in reality he is paying court to one of her pupils, the flighty Ginevra Fanshawe. For a time Lucy is herself drawn into "Dr. John's" sphere; however, any chance of his giving her serious attention is ended by the reappearance of Paulina Home, whose father has become the Count de Bassompierre, and who quickly becomes the focus of Dr. John's interest. Lucy herself finds an admirer in Paul Emanuel, Mme Beck's cousin, who teaches literature at the pensionnat; despite his stormy nature and Madame's attempted interference, Paul wins Lucy's love, establishes her in her own little school in Villette, and departs for the West Indies to manage some family affairs. Lucy remains faithful to him during the three years of his absence, but during his return home he perishes in a shipwreck.

In plot and setting, *Villette* has obvious similarities to *The Professor*, but it is not merely a refashioning of the materials used in the earlier work. It is colored even more highly than *The Professor* by Brontë's recollections of her two years at the Pensionnat Heger. The Hegers' school, with its cluster of classrooms and dormitories, its sheltered garden and "*allée défendue*," is recreated in careful detail. The Hegers themselves are unmistakably the models for Mme Beck, the school's calculating directress, and Paul Emanuel, the fiery teacher whose unpredictable temper alternately delights and

terrifies his pupils. Even the girls and teachers at Mme Beck's school can be identified with real-life originals Brontë had met in Brussels. Many other aspects of *Villette* are clearly autobiographical; such events as Lucy's journey through London and across the Channel, her visit to an art exhibition and a concert, her attendance at a performance by "Vashti" (Rachel), all are drawn from the writer's own experiences in Brussels and London. Lucy's relationship with the Brettons adumbrates elements of Brontë's friendship with George Smith and his mother. Lucy herself has recognizable similarities to Brontë, from her contemptuous dislike of Belgians and her distrust of Catholicism to her consciousness of physical inferiority and her susceptibility to depression.

Despite the temptation to regard *Villette* as autobiographical, however, the question of Lucy's likeness to her creator must be treated with caution, for Brontë distances herself from her narrator in a number of ways. Though Lucy speaks with the most authority, she is not always honest with herself or with her reader, and sometimes her interpretation of character or event betrays the biases of a mind warped to some extent by a sense of failure, frustration, and inadequacy. Lucy describes herself as a "looker-on" at life and dreads the revelation of her own feelings; thence springs the agony she feels when asked by M. Paul to take a part in the school play. From her vantage point of seemingly detached observer, she passes caustic comment on the weaknesses or pretensions of those around her. Even as a girl, her determination to avoid emotional involvement is evident in her almost clinical scrutiny of little Polly's suffering at the temporary separation from her father. Writing to George Smith shortly before completing the manuscript, Brontë explained her choice of the heroine's name (she had wavered between "Frost" and "Snowe"): "A *cold* name she must have; partly, perhaps, on the '*lucus a non lucendo*' principle--partly on that of the 'fitness of things,' for she has about her an external coldness." Convinced that fate has decreed that her life be deprived of warmth or love, Lucy is determined to protect herself from rebuff, from the pain that self-exposure might entail; for this reason, she at first conceals from Dr. John (and from the reader) the fact of their earlier acquaintance. She takes a masochistic satisfaction in the contrast between the beauty of her empty-headed young friend Ginevra and her own plainness. Her crusty manner leads Ginevra to call her "Diogenes" or "Timon," nicknames that Lucy enjoys, since they confirm her preferred posture of cynical coldness and spiritual independence.

Yet Lucy is a creature of strong feelings; and inevitably those feelings seek an outlet, first in the morbid depression that leads her to make a confession to a Catholic priest, then in an imagined attachment to Dr. John, who treats her kindly during her illness. This last episode and the subsequent shift of interest to Paul Emanuel have been seen as a structural weakness in the novel; but Lucy's fantasies about Dr. John are a necessary prelude to the real love that awakens in her later. The young Englishman is a kind of conventional novel hero; with his good looks, charming manner, and gentlemanly breeding he presents Lucy with a model of the masculine virtues that, in her longing for love, she can hardly resist. Not until she has buried this romantic illusion (a literal interment, with the burial of Dr. John's letters) can she recognize that love is possible in less conventional, but also less superficial terms in the hitherto comic form of Paul Emanuel.

The irascible schoolteacher takes Lucy into the last stages of her emotional growth, liberates her from her neurotic repressions, and enables her to find expression for her natural yearnings. From the first he perceives the powerful feelings that Lucy tries to

deny, and like Rochester with Jane Eyre, he teases those feelings to the surface by a mixture of insult and kindness. Paul is perhaps the most credible (and likable) of Brontë's male characters: she does not minimize his faults--his jealous pride, his overbearing manner, his pettiness; yet it is he who assumes the role of hero in *Villette*, not the more glamorous John Graham Bretton. He is the "natural" man, incapable of disguise or deceit, whose very weaknesses make him more human and accessible than the polished (and rather superficial) doctor. In the claustrophobic world of the pensionnat, Paul is a breath of fresh air and gives Lucy for the first time in her life a hope of happiness. Like Greatheart in *Pilgrim's Progress*, he becomes her champion, battling for her soul with Apollyon, the redoubtable Mme Beck.

Though cast in the same mold as Zoraïde Reuter of *The Professor*, Modeste Maria Beck is a far more formidable character. The argument as to whether or not she is a just representation of her original, Mme Heger, is irrelevant; her function is to be Lucy's crafty, passionless antagonist, a proponent of spiritual tyranny and Romanist subversion, and for this she is endowed with qualities of intellect and perceptiveness that make her a worthy enemy. Lucy acknowledges her powers and even voices her admiration for her ability to manipulate others. In some respects they are similar in temperament: both are secretive, both conceal their true feelings and assume a persona appropriate to the occasion; but while Mme Beck plays roles systematically as a means of maintaining her power, Lucy does so out of necessity, for fear of giving herself away and losing the mastery over self that protects her from pain.

Punctuating the story of Lucy's struggle with Mme Beck and her own feelings is the recurring motif of the ghostly nun, a Gothic device that turns out to have a somewhat bathetic explanation, but that is nevertheless effective as a means of projecting the turbulence of Lucy's emotions and suggesting the illusory nature of her grasp on reality. The nun in the garden, like the figure of Justine Marie who seems to stand between Lucy and M. Paul, is real enough, yet also a creation of her heated imagination; when she returns from her almost hallucinatory expedition to the park where she has seen Paul with her imagined rival Justine Marie, Lucy finds the ghostly nun lying on her bed--nothing more than a bolster covered in a black stole. The discovery is a fittingly ironic comment on Lucy's capacity for self-deception and misconstruction.

Distorted though her vision may be at times, Lucy Snowe's painful circumstances are not imaginary. In *The Professor* and *Jane Eyre*, Brontë had already examined the plight of a young woman of feeling and intelligence cast into the world and forced to make her own way. Her own experience had shown her that society placed no premium on inner worth; that happiness was doubtful for those who must earn their own bread; that love, sexual fulfillment, even domestic comfort were achieved by few women. Lucy Snowe tries to detach herself from life out of a conviction that any kind of emotional commitment must bring suffering and humiliation. Even though she wins love in the end, it is a very limited happiness that she is granted, since Paul is snatched away from her at the last moment by a cruel and arbitrary fate. Lucy may have gained maturity of vision and freedom from her neurotic fears of inadequacy, but her creator's pessimism denies her the final reward of romantic reunion: the return to an Edenic garden, permitted to Jane Eyre, is no longer possible.

Villette's intensity of feeling, its concentration on the heroine's yearning and frustration, its veiled and enigmatic ending did not sit well with early readers. Reviewers praised the novel's detailed portrait of school life and found much to applaud in the freshness

and vitality of "Currer Bell's" eccentric schoolmaster hero, but there was some dissatisfaction with the novel's emphasis on Lucy's suffering: the *Spectator* felt that Lucy "took a savage delight in refusing to be comforted," and Harriet Martineau protested in the *Daily News* at the "amount of subjective misery," the "atmosphere of pain" that hung about the novel. Readers familiar with the details of the author's life treated *Villette* as a personal revelation; Thackeray saw it as little more than the expression of Brontë's own yearnings for love, while Matthew Arnold declared the novel "disagreeable" because "the writer's mind contains nothing but hunger, rebellion and rage...." Such dismissive judgments, ignoring the book's narrative art and structural ironies, were less than just, yet they reflect an ineluctable truth: the source of the novel's strength, its power to arouse and disturb, does lie in the author's painful attempt to reconcile the conflict between her desires and her sense of inadequacy. *Villette* strikes the modern reader as a successful book because Brontë was able to transform her own "hunger, rebellion and rage" into a dramatic study of a tormented female sensibility, revealing its distortions and excesses as well as its nobility in suffering.

Even before the publication of this, her final work, Brontë's life had entered a new phase that was to bring her, however briefly, the happiness she had sought for so long. On 13 December 1852 she received a proposal of marriage from Arthur Bell Nicholls (1818-1906), her father's dour Irish curate since 1845. She had long suspected his interest in her, but the strength of his feeling took her by surprise. Though his evident suffering and abrupt dismissal by an enraged Mr. Brontë aroused her sympathy, she was not attracted to him, and discouraged his suit. Nicholls persisted in his addresses, however; he and Charlotte entered into a clandestine correspondence, and in April 1854, with Mr. Brontë's reluctant consent, they became engaged. Charlotte's feelings for Nicholls had ripened into respect, but she had no illusions about the brilliance of her prospects, telling Ellen Nussey that "what I taste of happiness is of the soberest order." Fifteen years earlier, she had refused Henry Nussey because he did not inspire in her "that intense attachment which would make me willing to die for him"; experience had cured her of such romantic idealism, and she was now ready to take refuge in the comfort of a relationship promising at least affection and security.

Brontë's increasing preoccupation with domestic affairs and a growing coolness in her relations with George Smith made it difficult for her to apply herself seriously to the task of writing a new novel. She did make several attempts, beginnings which survive in the manuscript fragments "The Story of Willie Ellin" and "Emma." The former, written in the early summer of 1853, represents a return to the theme of two rival brothers which Brontë had first explored in her juvenile stories. Like their many predecessors, the brothers bear the names Edward and William; the elder, Edward Ellin, is a cruel guardian to his ten-year-old brother, whom he intends to apprentice to trade. Willie seeks refuge in the former family house, Ellin Balcony, but is recaptured and whipped for his recalcitrance. The fragments show Charlotte Brontë experimenting with alternative plot lines, introducing different characters to act as Willie's protectors. One short part presents an unusual narrative point of view: the speaker appears to be a disembodied spirit that haunts the Ellins' ancestral home. The other fragment, "Emma," begun on 27 November 1853, is a more conventional account about a young girl called Matilda Fitzgibbon, who is left by her father as a boarder at a girls' school. At first presumed to be an heiress, she is treated with great partiality; but when the discovery is made that her father had given a fictitious name and address, and that he

has disappeared, "Matilda" is confronted by her irate schoolteacher and collapses. The fragment is interesting chiefly for its satirical portrait of Miss Wilcox, the eldest of the sisters who run the school; the chief male character, who takes the rejected Matilda under his wing at the end of the fragment, is called Mr. Ellin. "Emma" was published posthumously in the fourth number of the *Cornhill Magazine* (April 1860), with a laudatory introduction by Thackeray.

With her marriage to Arthur Bell Nicholls on 29 June 1854, Charlotte Brontë's literary activity came to an end. The couple honeymooned in Wales and Ireland, returning at the beginning of August to Haworth (Charlotte could not be prevailed upon to leave her ailing father for long), where Nicholls resumed his duties as Mr. Brontë's curate. For the first time since the deaths of Emily and Anne, Charlotte Brontë found life at the parsonage congenial and satisfying; her new role as a wife kept her active and occupied, and her husband, now reconciled with her father, daily revealed qualities which won her respect and increased her attachment to him. But the pleasures of this domesticity were short-lived. In January 1855 she discovered she was pregnant; she soon began to suffer from extreme nausea and vomiting, a condition which her delicate constitution was unable to bear. Worn out by the struggle, she died on 31 March 1855. Once more the house fell silent. Mr. Brontë remained there until his own death in 1861; Nicholls watched over him in his last years, then returned to his native Ireland, where he remarried in 1864.

Two further publications of importance maintained Brontë's prominence in the literary world after her death. One was Smith, Elder's publication in March 1857 of Mrs. Gaskell's controversial biography, *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*; this proved so successful that a second edition was required in April, but under the threat of legal action by the families of William Carus Wilson and Lady Scott (formerly Mrs. Edmund Robinson of Thorp Green), Mrs. Gaskell was obliged to make extensive revisions for the third edition, published in September. In her desire to present Brontë as an almost saintly heroine, Mrs. Gaskell had perhaps allowed herself to believe too readily in some of the more exaggerated accounts of the Brontë family's adversities. The same motive doubtless led her to omit any reference to Charlotte's infatuation for Constantin Heger, although she was aware of the letters that Charlotte had written to Heger after her final departure from Brussels. Not until 1913 would the letters and the circumstances surrounding them come into public view, when they were reproduced in the *Times* by Marion H. Spielmann.

During her researches in preparation for the writing of the *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*, Mrs. Gaskell accompanied Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth on a visit to Haworth. They succeeded in persuading Nicholls to lend them a large number of unpublished manuscripts, including that of *The Professor*. Though Mrs. Gaskell did not think the latter would add to Brontë's reputation, she bowed to Sir James's insistence that the book be published and returned the manuscript to Nicholls with the suggestion that he revise the work for publication. Nicholls did so, making some small changes to remove what Mrs. Gaskell had called the novel's "coarseness and profanity in quoting texts of scripture," and adding a brief prefatory note dated 22 September 1856. *The Professor* was finally published by Smith, Elder in two volumes in June 1857 and was given a muted reception by its first readers. In his introductory note, Nicholls maintained that *The Professor* and *Villette* were "in most respects unlike," but the reviewers fastened on the obvious similarities and treated the earlier work as little more than a crude sketch of its successor. They regarded it as a literary curiosity; its

interest lay in its connection with the career so movingly described by Mrs. Gaskell, rather than in any claims it might have to serious critical attention. *The Professor* would find its defenders: Peter Bayne praises its vivid character portrayals, thinks the story "full of life," and compares the novel favorably to *Villette*. Even Bayne, however, is forced to acknowledge that it is "by no means a wonderful book." Modern criticism has not sought to reverse that judgment.

In the course of his study, Bayne accords Charlotte pride of place among the Brontë sisters because she had "ten times more power" than Anne and a nature with more geniality and culture than Emily's. Later critics have moved in a different direction, finding Emily to be the greater writer. The stark and mythopoeic qualities of *Wuthering Heights* undeniably reflect a genius and a vision beyond Charlotte's capacities. Yet Emily's enigmatic romance, unique of its kind, was a dead end in English fiction, whereas the painful realism of Charlotte's studies of the human heart gave a fresh impetus and a new direction to the genre of the novel.

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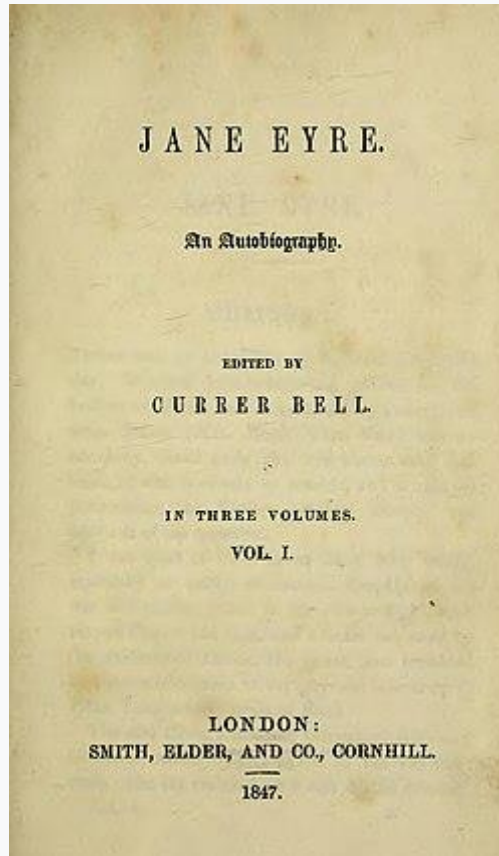
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-

Jane Eyre

Jane Eyre



Title page of the first edition, 1847

Author	Charlotte Brontë
Language	English
Genre	• Gothic • Bildungsroman • Romance
Set in	Northern England , early 19th century ^[a]
Publisher	Smith, Elder & Co.
Publication date	19 October 1847 ^[a]
Publication place	United Kingdom

Media type	Print
OCLC	3163777
Dewey Decimal	823.8
Followed by	Shirley
Text	Jane Eyre at Wikisource

Jane Eyre (/ˈɛər/ *AJR*; originally published as ***Jane Eyre: An Autobiography***) is a [novel](#) by the English writer [Charlotte Brontë](#). It was published under her pen name "Currer Bell" on 19 October 1847 by [Smith, Elder & Co.](#) of London. The first American edition was published in January 1848 by [Harper & Brothers](#) of New York.^[2] *Jane Eyre* is a [bildungsroman](#) that follows the experiences of its [eponymous heroine](#), including her growth to adulthood and her love for [Mr Rochester](#), the brooding master of [Thornfield Hall](#).^[3]

The novel revolutionised [prose fiction](#), being the first to focus on the moral and spiritual development of its protagonist through an intimate [first-person narrative](#), where actions and events are coloured by a psychological intensity. Charlotte Brontë has been called the "first historian of the private consciousness" and the literary ancestor of writers such as [Marcel Proust](#) and [James Joyce](#).^[4]

The book contains elements of [social criticism](#) with a strong sense of [Christian morality](#) at its core, and it is considered by many to be ahead of its time because of Jane's individualistic character and how the novel approaches the topics of [class](#), [sexuality](#), [religion](#) and [feminism](#).^{[5][6]} *Jane Eyre*, along with [Jane Austen](#)'s *[Pride and Prejudice](#)*, is one of the most famous [romance novels](#).^[7] It is considered one of the greatest novels in the English language,^[8] and in 2003 was ranked as the tenth best-loved book in Britain by the [BBC](#) in [The Big Read](#) poll.

Ref: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jane_Eyre



Young Jane argues with her guardian,
Mrs Reed of Gateshead.



St John Rivers admits Jane to Moor House.



The Salutation pub in Hulme, Manchester,
where Brontë began to write *Jane Eyre*;
the pub was a lodge in the 1840s.



Advertisement for a theatre adaptation of *Jane Eyre*, 1908

Summary

Jane Eyre, novel by Charlotte Brontë, first published in 1847 as *Jane Eyre: An Autobiography*, with Currer Bell (Brontë's pseudonym) listed as the editor. Widely considered a classic, it gave new truthfulness to the Victorian novel with its realistic portrayal of the inner life of a woman, noting her struggles with her natural desires and social condition.

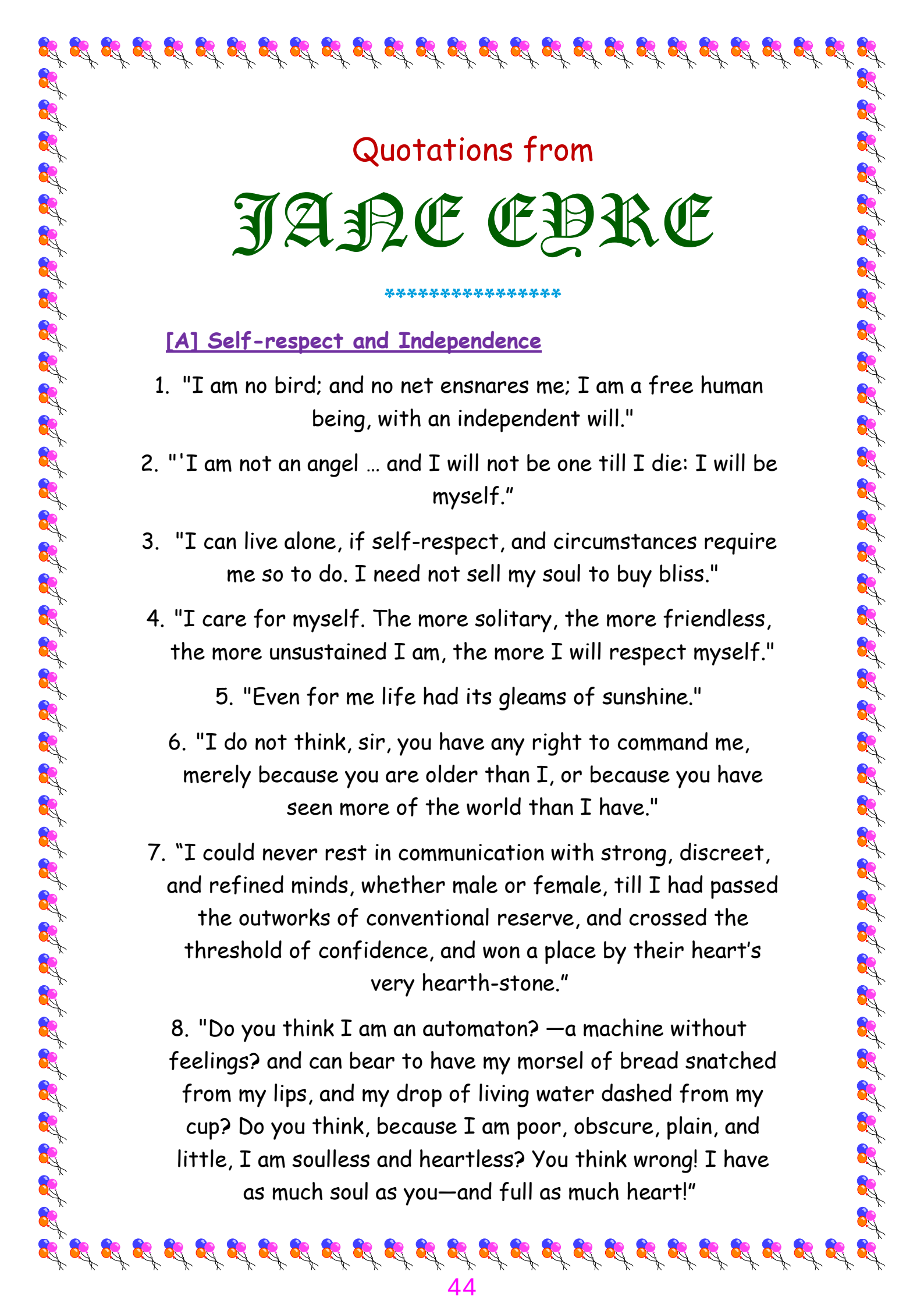
When the novel begins, the title character is a 10-year-old orphan who lives with her uncle's family; her parents had died of typhus. Other than the nursemaid, the family ostracizes Jane. She is later sent to the austere Lowood Institution, a charity school, where she and the other girls are mistreated; "Lowood," as the name suggests, is the "low" point in Jane's young life. In the face of such adversity, however, she gathers strength and confidence.

In early adulthood, after several years as a student and then teacher at Lowood, Jane musters the courage to leave. She finds work as a governess at Thornfield Hall, where she meets her dashing and Byronic employer, the wealthy and impetuous Edward Rochester. At

Thornfield Jane looks after young Adèle, the daughter of a French dancer who was one of Rochester's mistresses, and is befriended by the kindly housekeeper [Mrs. Alice Fairfax](#). Jane falls in love with Rochester, though he is expected to marry the snobbish and socially prominent Blanche Ingram. Rochester eventually [reciprocates](#) Jane's feelings and proposes marriage. However, on their wedding day, Jane discovers that Rochester cannot legally marry her, because he already has a wife, [Bertha Mason](#), who has gone mad and is locked away on the third floor because of her violent behaviour; her presence explains the strange noises Jane has heard in the mansion. Believing that he was tricked into that marriage, Rochester feels justified in pursuing his relationship with Jane. He pleads with her to join him in France, where they can live as husband and wife despite the legal prohibitions, but Jane refuses on principle and flees Thornfield.

Jane is taken in by people she later discovers are her cousins. One of them is [St. John](#), a principled clergyman. He gives her a job and soon proposes marriage, suggesting that she join him as a missionary in India. Jane initially agrees to leave with him but not as his wife. However, St. John pressures her to reconsider his proposal, and a [wavering](#) Jane finally appeals to Heaven to show her what to do. Just then, she hears a mesmeric call from Rochester. Jane returns to Thornfield to find the estate burned, set on fire by Rochester's wife, who then jumped to her death. Rochester, in an attempt to save her, was blinded. Reunited, Jane and Rochester marry. Rochester later regains some of his sight, and the couple have a son.

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Quotations from *JANE EYRE*

[A] Self-respect and Independence

1. "I am no bird; and no net ensnares me; I am a free human being, with an independent will."
2. "'I am not an angel ... and I will not be one till I die: I will be myself.'"
3. "I can live alone, if self-respect, and circumstances require me so to do. I need not sell my soul to buy bliss."
4. "I care for myself. The more solitary, the more friendless, the more unsustained I am, the more I will respect myself."
5. "Even for me life had its gleams of sunshine."
6. "I do not think, sir, you have any right to command me, merely because you are older than I, or because you have seen more of the world than I have."
7. "I could never rest in communication with strong, discreet, and refined minds, whether male or female, till I had passed the outworks of conventional reserve, and crossed the threshold of confidence, and won a place by their heart's very hearth-stone."
8. "Do you think I am an automaton? —a machine without feelings? and can bear to have my morsel of bread snatched from my lips, and my drop of living water dashed from my cup? Do you think, because I am poor, obscure, plain, and little, I am soulless and heartless? You think wrong! I have as much soul as you—and full as much heart!"

9. "It is in vain to say human beings ought to be satisfied with tranquility: they must have action; and they will make it if they cannot find it."

10. "I would always rather be happy than dignified."

[B] Gender Roles and Inequalities

1. "Women are supposed to be very calm generally: but women feel just as men feel ... it is narrow-minded in their more privileged fellow-creatures to say that they ought to confine themselves to making puddings and knitting stockings, to playing on the piano and embroidering bags. It is thoughtless to condemn them, or laugh at them, if they seek to do more or learn more than custom has pronounced necessary for their sex."

2. "I am not talking to you now through the medium of custom, conventionalities, nor even of mortal flesh: it is my spirit that addresses your spirit; just as if both had passed through the grave, and we stood at God's feet, equal—as we are!"

3. "Flirting is a woman's trade, one must keep in practice."

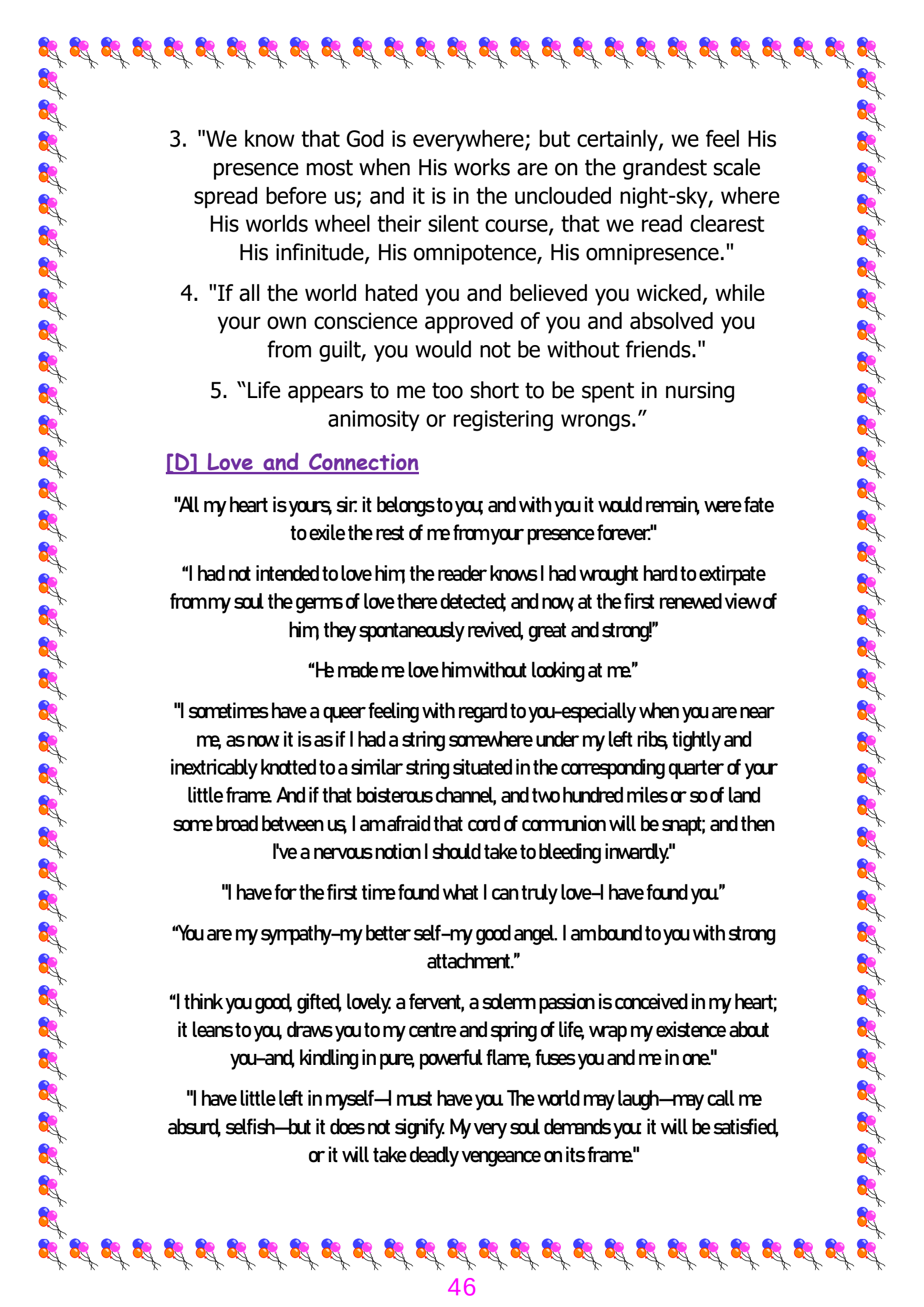
4. "He had not imagined that a woman would dare to speak to a man."

5. "It does good to no woman to be flattered by a man who does not intend to marry her; and it is madness in all women to let a secret love kindle within them."

[C] Society and Morality

1. Laws and principles are not for the times when there is no temptation: they are for such moments as this, when body and soul rise in mutiny against their rigour ... If at my convenience I might break them, what would be their worth?"

2. "Prejudices, it is well known, are most difficult to eradicate from the heart whose soil has never been loosened or fertilised by education: they grow there, firm as weeds among stones."

- 
3. "We know that God is everywhere; but certainly, we feel His presence most when His works are on the grandest scale spread before us; and it is in the unclouded night-sky, where His worlds wheel their silent course, that we read clearest His infinitude, His omnipotence, His omnipresence."
 4. "If all the world hated you and believed you wicked, while your own conscience approved of you and absolved you from guilt, you would not be without friends."
 5. "Life appears to me too short to be spent in nursing animosity or registering wrongs."

[D] Love and Connection

"All my heart is yours, sir: it belongs to you, and with you it would remain, were fate to exile the rest of me from your presence forever."

"I had not intended to love him; the reader knows I had wrought hard to extirpate from my soul the germs of love there detected; and now, at the first renewed view of him, they spontaneously revived, great and strong!"

"He made me love him without looking at me."

"I sometimes have a queer feeling with regard to you—especially when you are near me, as now it is as if I had a string somewhere under my left ribs, tightly and inextricably knotted to a similar string situated in the corresponding quarter of your little frame. And if that boisterous channel, and two hundred miles or so of land some broad between us, I am afraid that cord of communion will be snapped; and then I've a nervous notion I should take to bleeding inwardly."

"I have for the first time found what I can truly love—I have found you."

"You are my sympathy—my better self—my good angel. I am bound to you with strong attachment."

"I think you good, gifted, lovely. a fervent, a solemn passion is conceived in my heart; it leans to you, draws you to my centre and spring of life, wrap my existence about you—and, kindling in pure, powerful flame, fuses you and me in one."

"I have little left in myself—I must have you. The world may laugh—may call me absurd, selfish—but it does not signify. My very soul demands you: it will be satisfied, or it will take deadly vengeance on its frame."

"Every atom of your flesh is as dear to me as my own: in pain and sickness it would still be dear."

"I ask you to pass through life at my side—to be my second self, and best earthly companion."

"Reader, I married him"

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For more information on her quotes, please visit:

- 01] <https://bookroo.com/quotes/charlotte-bronte>
- 02] <https://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/2977639-jane-eyre-an-autobiography>
- 03] [https://www.azquotes.com/author/1955-Charlotte Bronte](https://www.azquotes.com/author/1955-Charlotte%20Bronte)
- 04] <https://www.theguardian.com/childrens-books-site/2016/apr/20/charlotte-brontes-greatest-quotes-ever>
- 05] <https://www.brainyquote.com/authors/charlotte-bronte-quotes>
- 06] [https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/1036615.Charlotte Bronte](https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/1036615.Charlotte%20Bronte)

"I ask you to pass through life at my side—to be my second self, and best earthly companion."

Charlotte Bronte
Jane Eyre



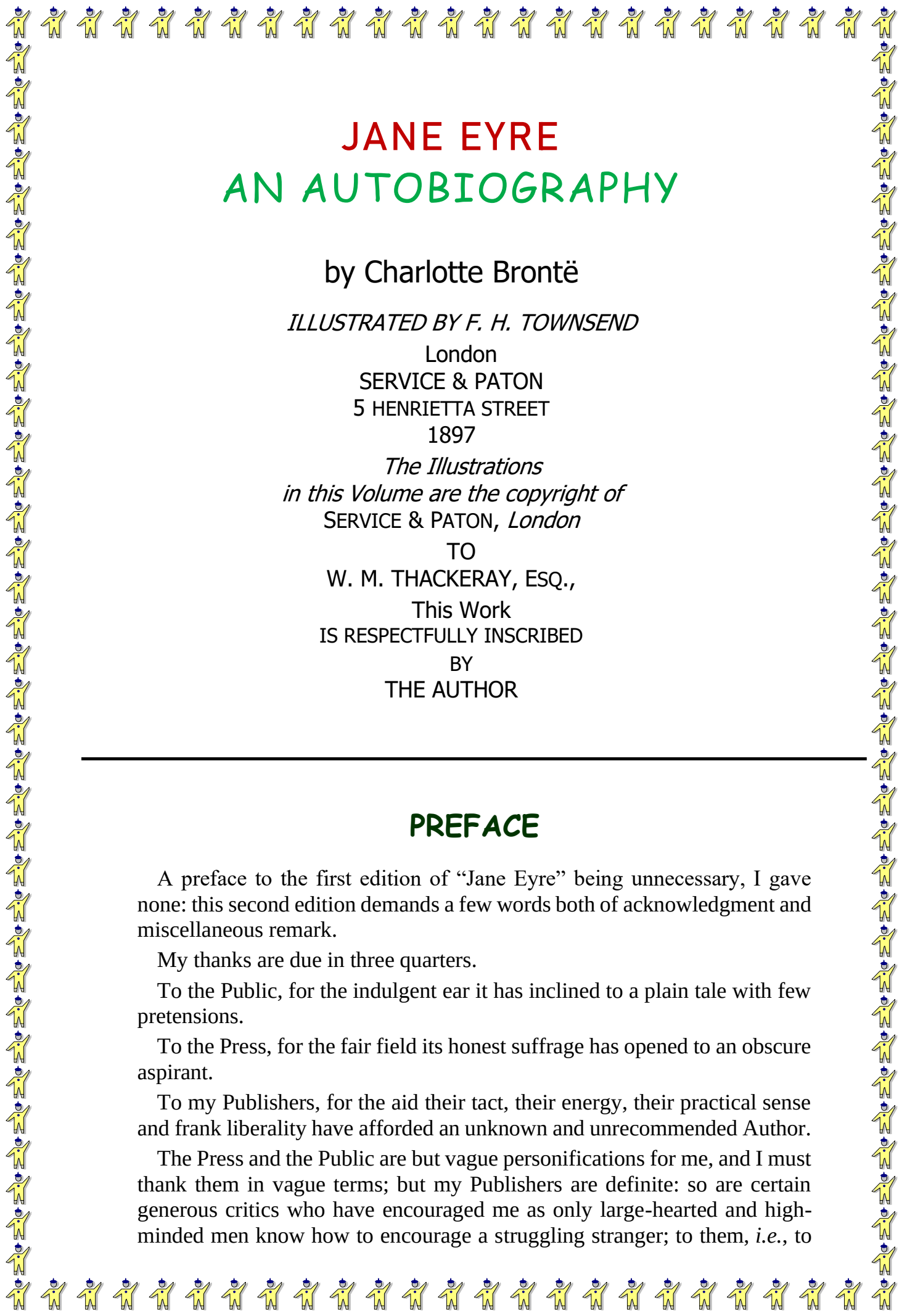
Read >>>> Jane Eyre

"Jane Eyre: An Autobiography" by Charlotte Brontë is a novel written in the early 19th century, specifically during the Victorian era. The story centers around Jane Eyre, an orphaned girl who faces hardship and oppression while growing up in the unkind household of her aunt, Mrs. Reed. The narrative unfolds her struggles against social class constraints and personal adversities as she searches for love, belonging, and independence. The opening of the novel introduces us to Jane Eyre's bleak existence at Gateshead Hall, where she lives with her aunt and cousins. As a child, Jane is mistreated by her relatives, particularly her cousin John Reed, who bullies her relentlessly. Following a confrontation with John, Jane is punished by being locked in the "red-room," a place associated with fear and isolation, which deepens her feelings of alienation and resentment. This initial section sets the tone for Jane's journey as it highlights her passionate spirit and desire for justice, laying the groundwork for her development and the challenges she will face in her quest for a place where she truly belongs.

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JANE EYRE AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

by Charlotte Brontë

ILLUSTRATED BY F. H. TOWNSEND

London
SERVICE & PATON
5 HENRIETTA STREET
1897

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TO
W. M. THACKERAY, ESQ.,
This Work
IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED
BY
THE AUTHOR

PREFACE

A preface to the first edition of “Jane Eyre” being unnecessary, I gave none: this second edition demands a few words both of acknowledgment and miscellaneous remark.

My thanks are due in three quarters.

To the Public, for the indulgent ear it has inclined to a plain tale with few pretensions.

To the Press, for the fair field its honest suffrage has opened to an obscure aspirant.

To my Publishers, for the aid their tact, their energy, their practical sense and frank liberality have afforded an unknown and unrecommended Author.

The Press and the Public are but vague personifications for me, and I must thank them in vague terms; but my Publishers are definite: so are certain generous critics who have encouraged me as only large-hearted and high-minded men know how to encourage a struggling stranger; to them, *i.e.*, to

my Publishers and the select Reviewers, I say cordially, Gentlemen, I thank you from my heart.

Having thus acknowledged what I owe those who have aided and approved me, I turn to another class; a small one, so far as I know, but not, therefore, to be overlooked. I mean the timorous or carping few who doubt the tendency of such books as “Jane Eyre:” in whose eyes whatever is unusual is wrong; whose ears detect in each protest against bigotry—that parent of crime—an insult to piety, that regent of God on earth. I would suggest to such doubters certain obvious distinctions; I would remind them of certain simple truths.

Conventionality is not morality. Self-righteousness is not religion. To attack the first is not to assail the last. To pluck the mask from the face of the Pharisee, is not to lift an impious hand to the Crown of Thorns.

These things and deeds are diametrically opposed: they are as distinct as is vice from virtue. Men too often confound them: they should not be confounded: appearance should not be mistaken for truth; narrow human doctrines, that only tend to elate and magnify a few, should not be substituted for the world-redeeming creed of Christ. There is—I repeat it—a difference; and it is a good, and not a bad action to mark broadly and clearly the line of separation between them.

The world may not like to see these ideas dissevered, for it has been accustomed to blend them; finding it convenient to make external show pass for sterling worth—to let white-washed walls vouch for clean shrines. It may hate him who dares to scrutinise and expose—to rase the gilding, and show base metal under it—to penetrate the sepulchre, and reveal charnel relics: but hate as it will, it is indebted to him.

Ahab did not like Micaiah, because he never prophesied good concerning him, but evil; probably he liked the sycophant son of Chenaanah better; yet might Ahab have escaped a bloody death, had he but stopped his ears to flattery, and opened them to faithful counsel.

There is a man in our own days whose words are not framed to tickle delicate ears: who, to my thinking, comes before the great ones of society, much as the son of Imlah came before the throned Kings of Judah and Israel; and who speaks truth as deep, with a power as prophet-like and as vital—a mien as dauntless and as daring. Is the satirist of “Vanity Fair” admired in high places? I cannot tell; but I think if some of those amongst whom he hurls the Greek fire of his sarcasm, and over whom he flashes the levin-brand of his denunciation, were to take his warnings in time—they or their seed might yet escape a fatal Rimoth-Gilead.

Why have I alluded to this man? I have alluded to him, Reader, because I think I see in him an intellect profounder and more unique than his contemporaries have yet recognised; because I regard him as the first social regenerator of the day—as the very master of that working corps who would restore to rectitude the warped system of things; because I think no commentator on his writings has yet found the comparison that suits him, the terms which rightly characterise his talent. They say he is like Fielding: they talk of his wit, humour, comic powers. He resembles Fielding as an eagle

does a vulture: Fielding could stoop on carrion, but Thackeray never does.

His wit is bright, his humour attractive, but both bear the same relation to his

serious genius that the mere lambent sheet-lightning playing under the edge of the summer-cloud does to the electric death-spark hid in its womb. Finally, I have alluded to Mr. Thackeray, because to him—if he will accept the tribute of a total stranger—I have dedicated this second edition of “JANE EYRE.”

CURRER BELL.

December 21st, 1847.

NOTE TO THE THIRD EDITION

I avail myself of the opportunity which a third edition of “Jane Eyre” affords me, of again addressing a word to the Public, to explain that my claim to the title of novelist rests on this one work alone. If, therefore, the authorship of other works of fiction has been attributed to me, an honour is awarded where it is not merited; and consequently, denied where it is justly due.

This explanation will serve to rectify mistakes which may already have been made, and to prevent future errors.

CURRER BELL.

April 13th, 1848.

Kindly proceed to read the FULL Novel

<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/1260/1260-h/1260-h.htm>



FULL BOOK ANALYSIS

JANE EYRE

At its core, *Jane Eyre* follows Jane's quest for home and belonging. The plot can be divided into five distinct sections: her early childhood at Gateshead, her education at Lowood, her time at Thornfield, her retreat to Moorhead, and her return to Rochester at Ferndean. Up to the end of the novel, Jane attempts to find a home in each of these places, but ultimately becomes uprooted either by societal forces or by her refusal to compromise her sense of self. We see this conflict begin in Jane's fight with John Reed and her subsequent punishment of being shut up in the red-room. This event establishes the way in which Jane's orphaned status renders her dependent on those with more power, regardless of whether they allow her love or dignity. She cannot find a home at Gateshead because of the Reeds' coldness. The red-room incident also introduces Jane's temper and stubbornness as both potential obstacles to her happiness and inner strength that allows her to stay true to herself in the face of adversity. Her pride also does not allow Jane to pretend to be a grateful, good-natured child who could fit into life at Gateshead.

When Mrs. Reed sends Jane to Lowood, her poisonous opinion of Jane threatens to follow her there through Brocklehurst's uncompassionate doctrine. Fortunately, Jane meets Ms. Temple and Helen, who teach Jane Christian values that temper her anger. Ms. Temple allows Jane to exonerate herself by holding her to truth, which allows Jane to see the possibility of justice and fairness under a true Christian doctrine. These factors, and the removal of

Brocklehurst, allow Lowood to feel like home for a time. However, when Ms. Temple leaves Lowood, Jane realizes that she cannot rely on one person for home. As she lacks financial independence, Jane must take on the role of a governess, dependent on a wealthy household for stability. Jane's time at Thornfield puts her back in touch with the intense passion of her youth, this time in the form of romantic love. Jane's moments with Rochester, even after they admit their love, are full of portentous signs, from Bertha's antics to the destruction of the chestnut tree. These frightening undertones create a sense of unease surrounding their relationship. Nevertheless, Jane believes Rochester to be her home because he values both her morality and her passion.

After Richard Mason stops the wedding, Jane uproots herself because she fears giving into the temptation of becoming Rochester's mistress. At this point, Rochester holds power over her both financially and emotionally, and Jane must leave to regain emotional ownership of herself. Her rescue by the Rivers siblings allow Jane space to reassess herself. Her inheritance grants her the financial independence to purchase Moorhead and create a home with the Rivers. St. John disrupts Jane's happiness with his proposal, in which he insists Jane forgo her passionate nature entirely and give herself over to a loveless marriage in the name of Christianity. The tension culminates in Jane's vision of Rochester and the ultimate rejection of St. John's proposal. Jane decides that she cannot live without Rochester, who also brings out her passion. When she finds Rochester at his retreat at Ferndean, the reader sees that Rochester has attempted to take responsibility for his marriage to Bertha by trying to save her from the fire. Blinded, Rochester must now depend on Jane, meaning she is no longer

subservient. Jane's marriage to him thus represents Jane choosing a home with both love and morality, in which she alone holds ownership of herself.

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<https://www.sparknotes.com/lit/janeeyre/plot-analysis/>

01] Summaries

02] Full Book Analysis

03] Full Book Summary

04] Chapter-wise Summary

05] Key Facts

06] List of Characters

07] Character Analysis

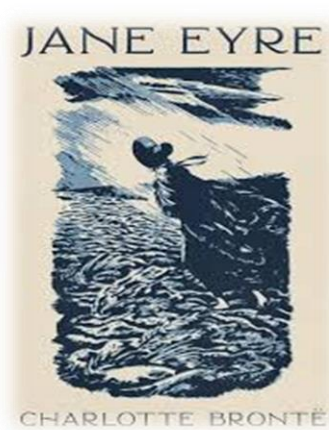
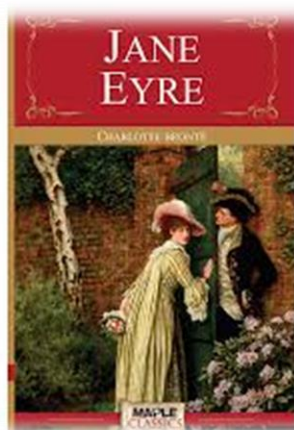
08] Literary Devices

09] Questions & Answers

10] Quotes

11] Quizzes

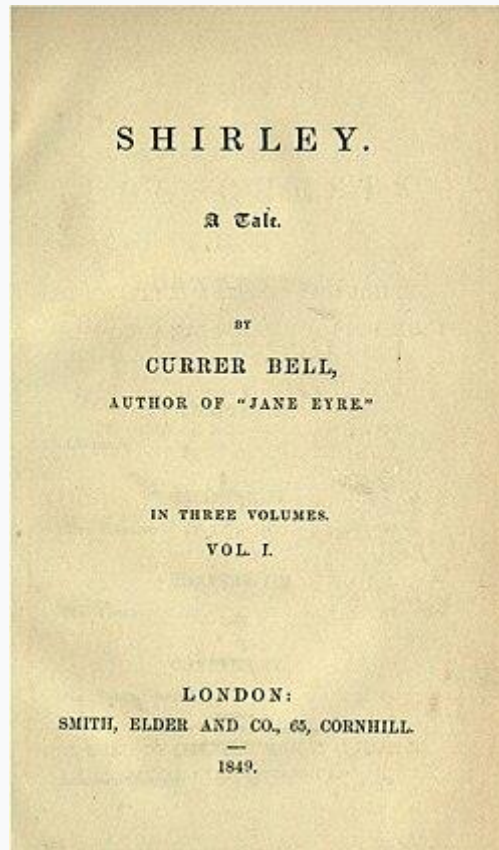
12] Essays



Shirley

Ref: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shirley_\(novel\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shirley_(novel))

Shirley



Title page of the first edition, 1849

Author	Charlotte Brontë
Language	English
Genre	Social novel
Set in	Yorkshire , 1811–12
Publisher	Smith, Elder & Co.

Publication date	26 October 1849
Publication place	United Kingdom
Media type	Print: hardback
Pages	572, in three volumes
<u>Dewey Decimal</u>	823.8
<u>LC Class</u>	PR4167 .S4 1849
Preceded by	<i>Jane Eyre</i>
Followed by	<i>Villette</i>
Text	<i>Shirley</i> at Wikisource

Shirley, A Tale is an 1849 [social novel](#) by the English novelist [Charlotte Brontë](#). It was Brontë's second published novel after *[Jane Eyre](#)* (originally published under Brontë's pseudonym Currer Bell). The novel is set in [Yorkshire](#) in 1811–12, during the industrial depression resulting from the [Napoleonic Wars](#) and the [War of 1812](#). The novel is set against the backdrop of the [Luddite](#) uprisings in the Yorkshire textile industry.

The novel's popularity led to the surname [Shirley](#) becoming popular as a first name for women. Brontë tells the reader it was a tradition in the family to only give this surname as a first name to male children. It wasn't commonly used as a first name in England before the book. It is now regarded as a female first name.

Background

While Charlotte Brontë was writing *Shirley*, three of her siblings died. Her brother [Branwell](#) died in September 1848, and her sister [Emily](#) fell ill and died in December. Brontë resumed writing, but then her only remaining sibling, her sister [Anne](#), became ill and died in May 1849.

Some critics believe that the character of Caroline Helstone was loosely based on Anne and it has been speculated that Brontë originally planned to let Caroline die but changed her mind because of her family tragedies. However, [Ellen Nussey](#), Charlotte's lifelong friend, claimed that the character of Caroline was based on herself.

Charlotte Brontë told [Elizabeth Gaskell](#) that Shirley is what she believed her sister, [Emily Brontë](#), would have been if she had been born into a wealthy family. Again, Ellen Nussey, who knew Emily as well as anyone outside the family, did not recognise Emily in Shirley.

The maiden name of Mrs Pryor is [Agnes Grey](#), the name of the main character in Anne's first novel. She was based on Margaret Wooler, the principal of Roe Head School, which Brontë attended as both student and teacher.

Locations

The novel is set in and around the Spen Valley in what is now called [West Yorkshire](#) (then the [West Riding of Yorkshire](#)). This area is now known as "Shirley country" to some locals.

Briarmains, a house mentioned in the novel, is based on the Red House in [Gomersal](#), where Mary Taylor, a friend of Charlotte, lived. The house is currently closed but previously open as a museum. Fieldhead, another house in the novel, is based on the Elizabethan manor house [Oakwell Hall](#), which is also now a museum. The attack on Robert Moore's mill was based on the [Luddite](#) attack on Cartwright's Mill at Rawfolds, [Liversedge](#), though it is believed that Charlotte also took some inspiration from Taylor's Mill at Hunsworth. Charlotte's father Patrick Bronte had lived in the Hightown area of Liversedge for a while, and Charlotte knew the area well.

Plot summary

Robert Moore is a mill owner noted for apparent ruthlessness towards his employees. He has laid off many of them, and is apparently indifferent to their consequent impoverishment. In fact, he had no choice, since the mill is deeply in debt. He is determined to restore his family's honour and fortune.

As the novel opens, Robert awaits delivery of new labour-saving machinery for the mill, which will enable him to lay off additional employees. Together with some friends, he watches all night, but the machinery is destroyed by "frame-breakers" on the way to the mill. Robert's business difficulties continue, due in part to continuing labour unrest, but even more to the [Napoleonic Wars](#) and the accompanying [Orders in Council](#), which forbid British merchants from trading in American markets.

Robert is very close to his cousin Caroline Helstone, who comes to his house to be taught French by his sister, Hortense. Caroline worships Robert. Caroline's father is dead and her mother has abandoned her, leaving her to be brought up by her uncle, Rev. Matthew Helstone. To keep himself from falling in love with her Robert keeps his distance, since he cannot afford to marry for pleasure or for love.

Caroline realises that Robert is growing increasingly distant and withdraws into herself. Her uncle does not sympathise with her "fancies". She has no money of her own, so she cannot leave, which is what she longs to do. She suggests that she might take up the role of governess, but her uncle dismisses the idea and assures her that she need not work for a living.

Caroline recovers somewhat when she meets Shirley, an independent heiress whose parents are dead and who lives with Mrs Pryor, her former governess. Shirley is lively, cheerful, full of ideas about how to use her money and how to help people, and very interested in business. Caroline and Shirley soon become close friends. Caroline becomes convinced that Shirley and Robert will marry. Shirley likes Robert, is very interested in his work, and is concerned about him and the threats he receives from laid-off millworkers. Both good and bad former employees are depicted. Some passages show the real suffering of those who were honest workers and can no longer find good employment; other passages show how some people use losing their jobs as an excuse to get drunk, fight with their previous

employers, and incite other people to violence. Shirley uses her money to help the poorest, but she is also motivated by the desire to prevent any attack on Robert.

One night, Rev. Matthew Helstone asks Shirley to stay with Caroline while he is away. Caroline and Shirley realise that an attack on the mill is imminent. They hear the dog barking and realise that a group of rioters has come to a halt outside the rectory. They overhear the rioters talking about entering the house, but are relieved when they decide to go on. The women go to the mill together to warn Robert, but they are too late. They witness the ensuing battle from their hiding place.

The whole neighbourhood becomes convinced that Robert and Shirley will marry. The anticipation of this event causes Caroline to fall ill. Mrs Pryor comes to look after her and learns the cause of Caroline's sorrow. She continues her vigil even as Caroline worsens daily. Mrs Pryor then reveals to Caroline that she is Caroline's mother. She had abandoned her because Caroline looked exactly like her father, the husband who tortured Mrs Pryor and made her life miserable. She had little money, so when her brother-in-law offered to bring up the child, she accepted the offer, took up the name of Pryor and went off to become a governess. Caroline now has a reason to live, since she knows that she can go and live with her mother, and begins to recover.

Shirley's uncle and aunt come to visit her. They bring with them their daughters, their son, and their son's tutor, Louis Moore. He is Robert's younger brother and taught Shirley when she was

younger. Caroline is puzzled by Shirley's haughty and formal behaviour towards Louis. Two men fall in love with Shirley and woo her, but she rejects both of them because she does not love them. The relationship between Shirley and Louis, meanwhile, remains ambivalent. There are days when Louis can ask Shirley to come to the schoolroom and recite the French pieces, she learned from him when she was younger. On other days Shirley ignores Louis. However, when Shirley is upset the only person, she can confide in is Louis. After a supposedly **mad dog** bites Shirley and makes her think that she is to die early, no one except Louis can make her reveal her fears.

Robert returns one dark night, first stopping at the market and then returning to his home with a friend. The friend asks him why he left when it seemed so certain that Shirley loved him and would have married him. Robert replies that he had assumed the same, and that he had proposed to Shirley before he left. Shirley had at first laughed, thinking that he was not serious, and then cried when she discovered that he was. She had told him that she knew that he did not love her, and that he asked for her hand not for her sake, but for her wealth. Robert had walked away filled with a sense of humiliation, even as he knew that she was right. This self-disgust had driven Robert away to London, where he realised that restoring the family name was not as important as maintaining his self-respect. He had returned home determined to close the mill if he had to, and go away to Canada to make his fortune. Just as Robert finishes his narration, his friend hears a gunshot and Robert falls from his horse.

The friend takes Robert to his own home and looks after him. After a turn for the worse, Robert slowly gets better. A visit from Caroline revives him, but she has to come secretly, hiding from her uncle and his friend and his family. Robert soon moves back to his own home and persuades his sister that the very thing their house needs to cheer it up is a visit from Caroline. Robert asks for Caroline's forgiveness.

Louis proposes to Shirley, despite the difference in their relative situations, and Shirley agrees to marry him. At first Caroline is to be Shirley's bridesmaid, but Robert proposes to her and she accepts. The novel ends with Caroline marrying Robert and Shirley marrying Louis.

Characters

The four central characters are studies in contrast: the two friends Caroline Helstone and Shirley Keeldar, and their lovers, the brothers Robert and Louis Gérard Moore.

- **Robert Gérard Moore** – An industrialist whose **textile mill** is idle because of the war. Perceived as an outsider because he comes from **Antwerp**, even though he is a cousin of Caroline's. Robert Moore installs new labour-saving machinery in his mill and becomes the target of Luddite attacks.
- **Louis Gérard Moore** – Robert's brother, working as a tutor for Shirley's uncle.
- **Caroline Helstone** – A timid and uncertain, but also wise and capable young woman, the niece of Rev. Helstone and best friend of Shirley.

- **Shirley Keeldar** – An orphaned heiress to a fortune. A headstrong, independent and determined young woman.

Other characters in the novel include:

- **Rev. Matthew Helstone** – Caroline's uncle. A fierce man, who is not cruel, but still shows little affection for his niece. Marriage has made him distrustful of women in general.
- **Hortense Gérard Moore** – Robert and Louis's sister.
- **Hiram Yorke** – A local landowner.
- **Joseph "Joe" Scott** – Robert Moore's foreman at the mill.
- **Mrs Pryor** – Shirley's timid but wise governess, who moves to Fieldhead together with Shirley. She eventually turns out to be Caroline's long-lost mother, Mrs Agnes Helstone.
- The three curates of the three parishes – the Anglo-Irishman Peter Malone, the **Cockney** Joseph Donne, and the amiable Davy Sweeting.
- **William Farren** – a hardworking, patient worker. The book's example of the perfect working-class man.

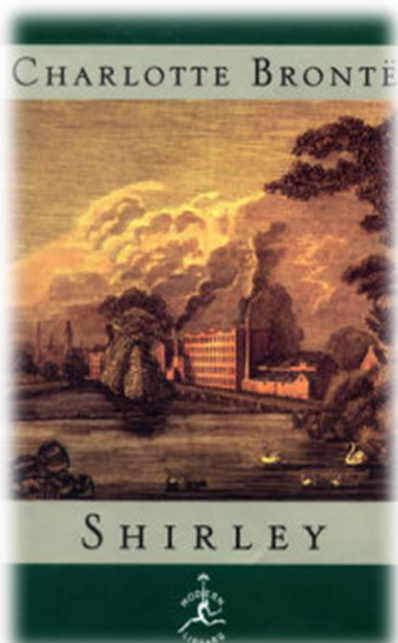
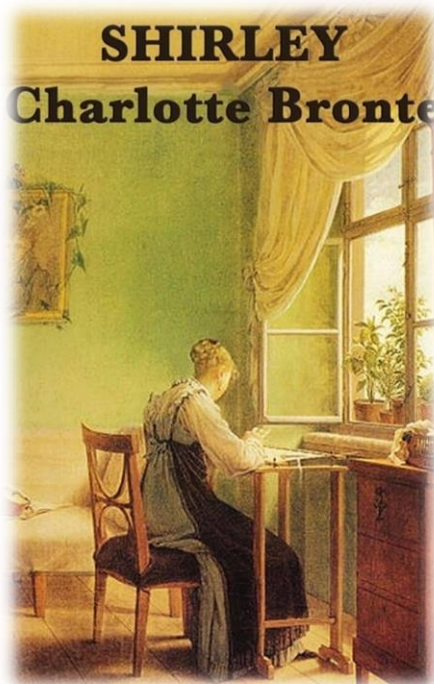
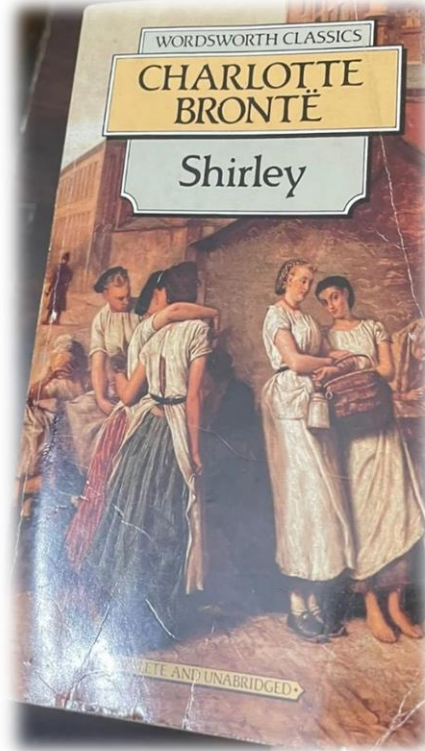
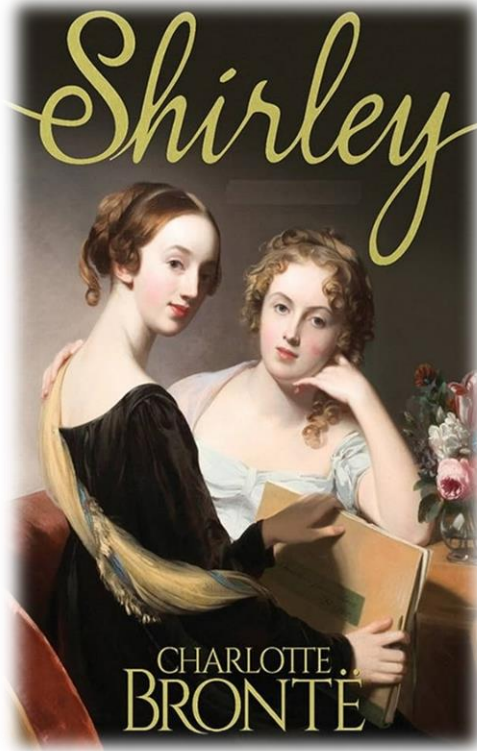
Style

Unlike *Jane Eyre*, which is written in the first person and narrated by the title character, *Shirley* is narrated by an omniscient but unnamed third-person narrator. For her third novel *Villette*, Brontë returned to first-person narration.

Adaptations

The novel has been adapted to the screen only once, in 1922. The silent adaptation was directed by A. V. Bramble and Carlotta Breese starred as the title character.

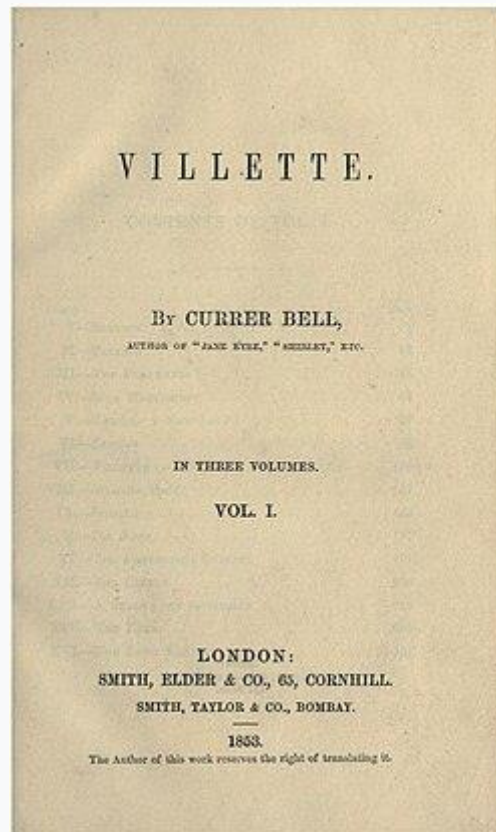
In March 2014, BBC Radio 4 broadcast a ten-episode dramatisation by Rachel Joyce in the station's 15 Minute Drama slot. Narrated by Lesley Sharp, the series starred Joanne Froggatt as Caroline and Jemima Rooper as Shirley.



Villette (novel)

{Ref: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Villette_\(novel\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Villette_(novel))}

Villette



Title page of the first edition, 1853

Author	Charlotte Brontë
Language	English
Genre	Romance novel , psychological fiction
Publisher	Smith, Elder & Co.
Publication date	27 January 1853 ^[1]

Publication place	United Kingdom
Media type	Print: hardback octavo
Pages	672, in 3 volumes
Dewey Decimal	823.8
LC Class	PR4167 .V5
Preceded by	Shirley
Followed by	The Professor
Text	Villette at Wikisource

Villette (/ˈviːˈlɛt/ *vee-LET*) is an 1853 novel written by English author [Charlotte Brontë](#). After an unspecified family disaster, the [protagonist](#) Lucy Snowe travels from her native England to the fictional [Continental](#) city of Villette to teach at a girls' school, where she is drawn into adventure and romance.

Villette was Charlotte Brontë's third and last novel published during her life. It was preceded in writing by [The Professor](#) (her posthumously published first novel, of which *Villette* is a reworking, though still not very similar), [Jane Eyre](#), and [Shirley](#).

Author's background

In 1842 Charlotte Brontë, at the age of 26, travelled to [Brussels](#), [Belgium](#), with her sister [Emily](#). There they enrolled in a *pensionnat* (boarding school) run by M. and Mme. [Constantin Heger](#). In return for board and tuition, Charlotte taught English and Emily taught music.

The sisters' time at the *pensionnat* was cut short when their aunt, [Elizabeth Branwell](#), died in October 1842. Elizabeth had joined the Brontë family to care for the children after the death of her sister, their mother Maria Brontë, née [Maria Branwell](#).

Charlotte returned, alone, to Brussels in January 1843 to take up a teaching post at the *pensionnat*. Her second stay in Brussels was not a happy one. She became lonely and [homesick](#), and fell in love with M. Heger, a married man. She finally returned to her family's [rectory](#) in [Haworth](#), [England](#), in January 1844.

Charlotte drew on this source material for her first (albeit unsuccessful) novel [The Professor](#). After several publishers had rejected it, Brontë reworked the material and made it the basis of *Villette*. Most literary historians believe that the character of M. Paul Emanuel is closely based upon that of M. Heger. Furthermore, the character of Graham Bretton is widely acknowledged to have been modelled upon Brontë's publisher, [George Murray Smith](#).

Locale

The novel is initially set in the English countryside, and later follows Lucy Snowe, the main character to the fictional town of Villette, a Gothic town where the majority of the action takes place. Villette is modelled upon the city of [Brussels](#) and is set in the fictional French-speaking kingdom of Labassecour (modelled on [Belgium](#)). "La [basse-cour](#)" is French for "the [farmyard](#)".

Characters

Lucy Snowe: The narrator and main character of *Villette*. A quiet, self-reliant, intelligent, 23-year-old woman. Lucy has, as Miss Ginevra Fanshawe asserts, "no attractive accomplishments – no beauty" as Lucy does her best not to stand out or form attachments. Although she seems to lack any living relatives, she is the god-daughter of Mrs. Bretton.

Though usually reserved and emotionally self-controlled, Lucy has strong feelings and affections for those whom she really values. She even sincerely cares for the giddy Ginevra, albeit in a blunt, curmudgeonly fashion. She is a firm Protestant and denounces [Roman Catholicism](#) as false ("God is not with Rome"). She falls in love with

M. Emanuel and consents to marry him someday. With his help Lucy leaves Madame Beck's and establishes her own school.

M. Paul Emanuel: An irascible, autocratic *professeur* at Madame Beck's *pensionnat*. He is also a relative of Madame Beck. Although he insults Lucy frequently, Lucy comes to relish his good qualities. He is generous; he delights in giving Lucy secret presents. He is kind and magnanimous, as is shown by his supporting and sheltering the elderly grandmother of his dead fiancée, Justine Marie, together with his former tutor (Père Silas) and a servant. He is a devout Catholic and tries to convert Lucy, a Protestant, to Catholicism but fails. As he grows closer to Lucy and falls in love with her everyone in his life attempts to keep them apart, and he is eventually banished to a family-owned plantation in [Guadeloupe](#) for three years. At the end of the novel, it is strongly hinted that he dies in a [shipwreck](#) attempting to return to Labassecour.

Dr. John Graham Bretton: A handsome young English gentleman who is a physician. He is the son of Lucy's godmother, Mrs. Bretton. He is described as "cheerful," "benignant," and "bland." Lucy, when young, showed no particular fondness for him. However, when they meet again ten years later, their cool friendship is more than rekindled, and Lucy secretly begins to cherish an affection for him. Graham does not return this affection, however, and calls her "quiet Lucy Snowe" and "a being inoffensive as a shadow." He has, at first, a passion for Ginevra Fanshawe, until her love of money and a sneer at Mrs. Bretton quenches his love at last. He then falls in love with Polly de Bassompierre. Lucy conquers her love for him and buries all his treasured letters to her, saying, "Good-night, Dr. John; you are good, you are beautiful but you are not mine. Good-night, and God bless you!" John and Polly eventually marry and live a happy life together.

Mrs. Louisa Bretton: Dr. John Graham Bretton's mother and Lucy's godmother. She is a widow and has "health without flaw, and her spirits of that tone and equality which are better than a fortune to the possessor." She is immensely proud of her son but is not above teasing him.

Polly Home/Countess Paulina Mary de Bassompierre: A 17-year-old English girl who is a cousin of Ginevra Fanshawe. She is first introduced to the story as a very

young girl, who is called Polly. As a child, she was very fond of Graham Bretton. She grows to be a beautiful young lady who is delicate and intelligent. Upon meeting Graham again, their friendship develops into love, and they eventually marry. Lucy says of her, "She looked a mere doll," and describes her as shaped like "a model." She and Lucy are friends. Although Lucy is often pained by Polly's relationship with Graham, she looks upon their happiness without a grudge.

Mr. Home/Count de Bassompierre: Polly's father, who inherited his noble title within recent years. He is a sensitive and thoughtful man who loves his daughter. When he notices Polly's relationship with Graham, he has difficulty recognising and accepting that his daughter is now a grown woman. He regards her as a mere child and calls her his "little treasure" or "little Polly." He at last relinquishes Polly to Graham, saying, "May God deal with you as you deal with her!" He lives to a ripe old age.

Ginevra Fanshawe: A beautiful but shallow and vain 18-year-old English girl with a light, careless temperament. She is an incorrigible coquette and has a relish for flirtation. Although related to the Homes/Bassompierres her own family is not wealthy, and she expects others to finance her lavish tastes. Lucy meets her on a ship journeying to France. Ginevra is a student at Madame Beck's, and it is her passing remark, "I wish you would come to Madame Beck's; she has some marmots [Fr. "kids"] you might look after: she wants an English gouvernante, or was wanting one two months ago," which prompts Lucy to go to Villette. Despite Ginevra's faults, Lucy has a certain fondness for her. Ginevra thinks of Lucy as "caustic, ironic, and cynical," calling her "old lady," "dear crosspatch," and most frequently "[Timon](#)" (after a Greek [misanthrope](#) who lived during the 5th century BC). Ginevra uses Graham shamelessly until he loses interest in her. She eventually elopes with and marries Count Alfred de Hamal and keeps in touch with Lucy via letters.

Count Alfred de Hamal: A colonel-count, Ginevra's suitor, has a Continental appearance with delicate features. Ginevra Fanshawe states "Colonel de Hamal is a gentleman of excellent connections, perfect manners, sweet appearance, with pale interesting face, and hair and eyes like an Italian. Then too he is the most delightful company possible—a man quite in my way; not sensible and serious like the other [Dr

John]; but one with whom I can talk on equal terms". Lucy disagrees with her and describes the count as "The doll—the puppet—the manikin—the poor inferior creature! A mere lackey for Dr. John his valet, his foot-boy!"

Madame Modeste Maria Beck: The owner and headmistress of the boarding school for girls where Lucy is employed. She is short and stout, but not uncomely. Her complexion is described as fresh. "She looked well, though a little bourgeois" She has good sense and is an excellent administrator, though that is because she spies on everyone and goes through their possessions frequently. Lucy says, "[S]he had no heart to be touched: it reminded her where she was impotent and dead." Lucy further describes her as "wise, firm, faithless; secret, crafty, passionless; watchful and inscrutable; acute and insensate — withal perfectly decorous — what more could be desired?" She seems attracted to Graham at first, but that dies away quickly. She then seeks to marry M. Paul Emanuel to keep him and his fortune under her thumb. She does all she can to keep Lucy and Paul apart, including conspiring with Père Silas.

Rosine: The pretty but unprincipled portress at Madame Beck's boarding school. She is "smart, trim, and pert" and "not a bad sort of person," according to Lucy. She likes to be bribed.

Père Silas: An elderly Catholic priest who makes it his mission, and later M. Emanuel's, to convert Lucy. He is the mentor of Paul Emanuel, and uses the latter's love of the late Justine Marie to manipulate him. He is instrumental in keeping M. Paul and Lucy apart.

Justine Marie: A deceased [noviciate](#) nun, the former love of Paul Emanuel. She had originally hoped to marry him, but her family's objections led her to join a convent. During her time at Madame Beck's, Lucy suspects she is being haunted by Justine's ghost.

Plot

Villette begins with its protagonist and [unreliable narrator](#), Lucy Snowe, aged 13, staying at the home of her godmother Mrs. Bretton in "the clean and ancient town of Bretton", in England. Also in residence are Mrs. Bretton's teenaged son, John Graham

Bretton (whom the family calls Graham), and a young visitor, Paulina Home (who is called Polly), who is aged 6. Polly's mother, who neglected her daughter, has recently died and her father is recommended by doctors to travel to improve his spirits. Polly is invited by Mrs. Bretton to stay. Polly is a serious little girl, who is described as unlike normal children.

Polly soon develops a deep devotion to Graham, who showers her with attention. But Polly's visit is cut short when her father arrives to summon her to live with him abroad.

For reasons that are not stated, Lucy leaves Mrs. Bretton's home a few weeks after Polly's departure. Some years pass, during which an unspecified family tragedy leaves Lucy without family, home, or means. After some initial hesitation, she is hired as a caregiver by Miss Marchmont, a rheumatic crippled woman. Lucy is soon accustomed to her work and has begun to feel content with her quiet, frugal lifestyle.

The night of a dramatic storm, Miss Marchmont regains all her energy and feels young again. She shares with Lucy her sad love story of 30 years ago, and concludes that she should treat Lucy better and be a better person. She believes that death will reunite her with her dead lover. The next morning, Lucy finds Miss Marchmont died in the night.

Lucy then leaves the English countryside and goes to [London](#). At the age of 22, she boards a ship for Labassecour despite knowing very little French. On the ship, she meets Ginevra Fanshawe, who tells Lucy that the directress of her [boarding school](#) for girls (based upon the Hegers' [Brussels pensionnat](#)) she is attending, Madame Beck, needs a *bonne* for her children. She travels to the city of Villette in Labassecour where Madame Beck's school is located. After a time, she is hired to teach English at the school, in addition to having to mind Madame Beck's three children. She thrives despite Madame Beck's constant spying on the staff and students.

"Dr. John," a handsome English doctor, frequently visits the school at the behest of Madame Beck, and deepens his affection for the [coquette](#) Ginevra Fanshawe. In one of *Villette's* famous [plot twists](#), "Dr. John" is later revealed to be John Graham Bretton,

a fact that Lucy has known since he once asked her why she was staring at him, but has deliberately concealed from the reader.

During the school holidays, all the teachers and pupils have either gone to travel abroad or gone back to their families. The school is completely empty except for a disabled child whom Lucy is supposed to take care of. After the disabled child is fetched away, Lucy is extremely lonely and becomes both mentally and physically ill. She goes to a [Catholic](#) church (despite being a [Protestant](#)) to confess to a priest. On the way back to the school, she collapses due to fever and mental exhaustion. Dr. John brings her to his home, which he shares with his mother, Mrs. Bretton.

Graham recognises Lucy only after she is brought to Mrs. Bretton's home. After Dr. John (i.e., Graham) discovers Ginevra's true character while at the theatre, he turns his attention to Lucy, and they become close friends. She values this friendship highly despite her usual emotional reserve. Lucy soon develops feelings for Dr. John and treasures the letters he sends her once she returns to the *pensionnat*.

Lucy and Graham meet Polly (Paulina Home) again at the same theatre after a fire, in which Polly is injured. Polly's father has inherited the title "de Bassompierre" and is now a [Count](#); thus her name is now Paulina Mary Home de Bassompierre. Polly and Graham soon discover that they knew each other in the past and slowly renew their friendship. They fall in love and eventually marry despite the initial reluctance of Polly's father.

Lucy becomes progressively closer to a colleague, the irascible, autocratic, and confrontational *professeur*, M. Paul Emanuel, a relative of Mme. Beck. Lucy gradually realises that his apparent antagonism is actually helping her to overcome her weaknesses and to grow. She and Paul eventually fall in love.

However, a group of conspiring antagonists, including Madame Beck, the priest Père Silas, and the relatives of M. Paul's long-dead fiancée, work to keep the two apart, on the grounds that a union between a [Catholic](#) and a [Protestant](#) is impossible. They finally succeed in forcing M. Paul's departure for [Guadeloupe](#) to oversee a [plantation](#) there. He nonetheless declares his love for Lucy before his departure and

arranges for her to live independently as the headmistress of her own [day school](#), which she later expands into a *pensionnat*.

During the course of the novel, Lucy has three encounters with the figure of a [nun](#) — which may be the ghost of a nun who was [buried alive](#) on the school's grounds as punishment for breaking her vow of [chastity](#). In a highly symbolic scene near the end of the novel, she discovers the "nun's" habit in her bed and destroys it. She later finds out that it was a disguise worn by Ginevra's amour, Alfred de Hamal, placed in Lucy's bed as a prank. The episodes with the nun no doubt contributed substantially to the novel's reputation as a [gothic novel](#). Ginevra keeps in contact with Lucy through letters that show the young coquette has not changed and expects to live off of her uncle's (Basompierre's) good graces.

Villette's final pages are ambiguous. Although Lucy says that she wants to leave the reader free to imagine a [happy ending](#), she hints strongly that M. Paul's ship was destroyed by a storm during his return journey from the [West Indies](#). She says that, "M. Emanuel was away three years. Reader, they were the three happiest years of my life." This passage suggests that he was drowned by the "destroying angel of tempest."

Brontë described the ambiguity of the ending as a "little puzzle" (quoted in Chapter XII of part 2 of [Gaskell's Life](#)).

Themes

Villette is noted not so much for its plot as for its acute tracing of Lucy's [psychology](#). The novel, in a gothic setting, simultaneously explores themes of isolation, doubling, displacement and subversion, and each of their impacts upon the protagonist's psyche.

Villette is sometimes celebrated as an exploration of [gender roles](#) and [repression](#). In *The Madwoman in the Attic*, critics [Sandra Gilbert](#) and [Susan Gubar](#) have argued that the character of Lucy Snowe is based in part on [William Wordsworth's Lucy poems](#). Gilbert and Gubar emphasise the idea of feminine re-writing. Some critics have explored the issues of Lucy's psychological state in terms of what they call "patriarchal constructs" which form her cultural context.

Villette also explores isolation and cross-cultural conflict in Lucy's attempts to master the French language, as well as conflicts between her English [Protestantism](#) and [Catholicism](#). Her denunciation of Catholicism is unsparing: e.g., "God is not with Rome."

Critical reception

[George Eliot](#) believed *Villette* "a still more wonderful book than *Jane Eyre*. There is something almost preternatural in its power."

"There are so few books, and so many volumes. Among the few stands *Villette*."—[George Henry Lewes](#)

[Virginia Woolf](#) claims that *Villette* is Charlotte Brontë's "finest novel," and highlights its evocative descriptions of the natural world as a reflection of the main character's state of mind.

The Daily Telegraph's [Lucy Hughes-Hallett](#) argues that *Villette* is greater than Brontë's most famous work, *Jane Eyre*. She states that the novel is "an astonishing piece of writing, a book in which phantasmagorical set pieces alternate with passages of minute psychological exploration, and in which Brontë's marvellously flexible prose veers between sardonic wit and stream-of-consciousness, in which the syntax bends and flows and threatens to dissolve completely in the heat of madness, drug-induced hallucination and desperate desire."

[Claire Fallon](#) of *The Huffington Post* notes that *Villette* shares many themes with Brontë's previous works such as *Jane Eyre* yet highlights the dichotomy between the two novels' protagonists. "*Villette* bears a certain Brontëan resemblance to *Jane Eyre* – gothic mysticism, spiritual intensity, bursts of passionate lyricism, a plain heroine making her way in an unfriendly world – but is in many other ways its inverse. *Jane Eyre* works in sharp black and white, while *Villette* works in psychological and even factual grey areas. Where Jane's specialness is stipulated, despite her poverty and plain looks, the heroine of *Villette*, Lucy Snowe, is an unassuming figure who spends the majority of the novel as a quiet observer. Jane

insists on her own agency, while Lucy is reactive at best. Yet it is Lucy who truly breaks free of the expected domestic fate."

Adaptations

In print

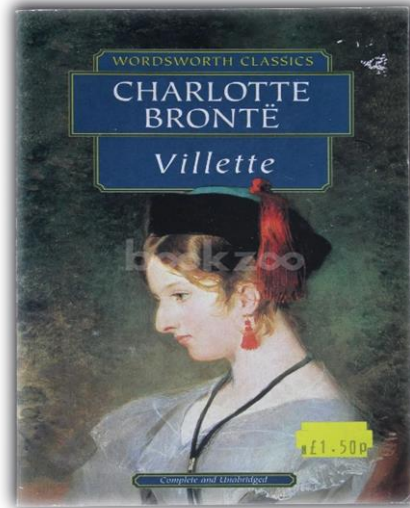
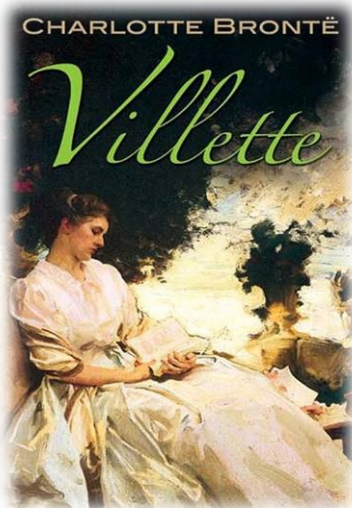
Jamaica Kincaid's novel *Lucy* (1990) draws numerous themes, character names, and plot elements from *Villette*, both echoing its concern of female repression while also offering an implicit **postcolonial** critique of the novel's slave-owning love interest.

In dramatisations

In 1970, the **BBC** produced a television miniseries based on *Villette*, directed by **Moira Armstrong** and written by Lennox Phillips. It starred **Judy Parfitt** as Lucy Snowe, **Bryan Marshall** as Dr. John Graham Bretton, **Peter Jeffrey** as Paul Emanuel, and Mona Bruce as Madame Beck.

In 1999, the novel was adapted as a three-hour radio serial for **BBC Radio 4**.^[10] It was broadcast in February 1999 with **Catherine McCormack** as Lucy Snowe, **Joseph Fiennes** as Dr. Graham Bretton, **Harriet Walter** as Mme. Beck, **James Laurenson** as M. Paul Emanuel, and **Keira Knightley** as Polly. It was directed by Catherine Bailey and written by James Friel. *Villette* went on to win a **Sony Award**.

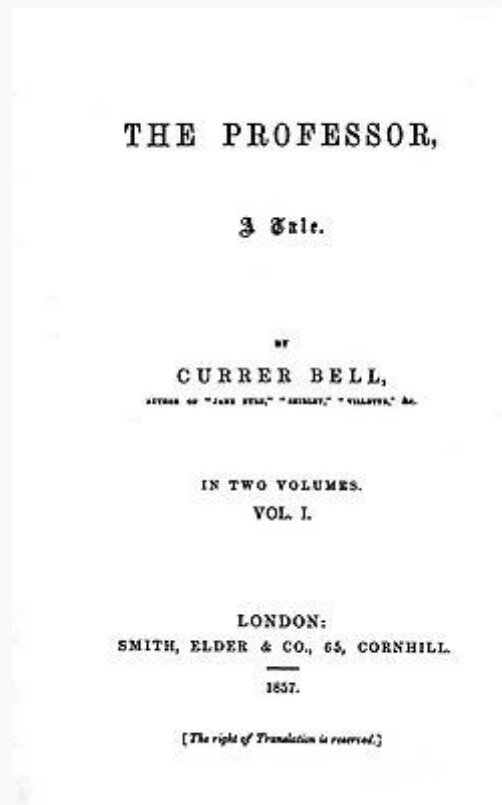
In August 2009, the novel was adapted as a two-week-long serial by **Rachel Joyce** for **BBC Radio 4**, directed by Tracey Neale and with **Anna Maxwell Martin** as Lucy Snowe.



The Professor

{Ref: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Professor_\(novel\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Professor_(novel))}

The Professor, A Tale.



Title page of the first edition, 1857

Author	Charlotte Brontë (Currer Bell)
Language	English, French
Genre	Romance novel
Publisher	Smith, Elder & Co.
Publication date	6 June 1857 (written 1846)

Publication place	United Kingdom
Media type	Print: hardback
Pages	330
<u>Dewey Decimal</u>	823.8
<u>LC Class</u>	PR4167 .P7
Preceded by	<u>Villette</u>
Text	<u>The Professor, A Tale.</u> at <u>Wikisource</u>

The Professor, A Tale. was the [first novel](#) by English author [Charlotte Brontë](#). It was written in 1846 before [Jane Eyre](#), but was rejected by many publishing houses. It was eventually published, posthumously, in 1857, with the approval of Charlotte Brontë's widower, [Arthur Bell Nicholls](#), who took on the task of reviewing and editing the text.

Plot

The novel is the story of a young man, William Crimsworth, and is a first-person narrative from his perspective. It describes his maturation, his career as a teacher in Brussels, and his personal relationships.

The story starts with a letter William has sent to his friend Charles, detailing his rejection of his uncle's proposal that he become a clergyman, as well as his first meeting with his rich brother Edward. Seeking work as a tradesman, William is offered the position of a clerk by Edward. However, Edward is jealous of William's education and intelligence, and treats him terribly. Through the actions of the sympathetic Mr Hunsden, William is

relieved of his post, but starts a new job at a boys' boarding school in Belgium.

The school is run by the friendly Monsieur Pelet, who treats William kindly and politely. Soon William's merits as a "professor" reach the ears of the headmistress of the neighbouring girls' school. Mademoiselle Reuter offers him a position at her school, which he accepts. Initially captivated by her, William begins to entertain ideas of falling in love with her, but then he overhears her and Monsieur Pelet talking about their upcoming marriage and their deceitful treatment of him.

William begins to treat Mademoiselle Reuter with cold civility as he sees her underlying nature. She, however, continues to try to draw him back in by pretending to be benevolent and concerned. She asks him to teach one of her young teachers, Frances, who hopes to improve her skill in languages. William sees promising intelligence in this pupil and slowly begins to fall in love with her.

Jealous of the attention Frances is receiving from William, Mademoiselle Reuter takes it upon herself to dismiss Frances from her post and to hide her address from William. After a long search he re-encounters Frances in a graveyard and they renew their acquaintance.

It is revealed that as she was trying to make herself amiable in William's eyes, Mademoiselle Reuter had accidentally fallen in love with him herself. Not wanting to cause a conflict with Monsieur Pelet, William leaves his establishment.

William gets a new position as a "professor" at a college, allowing him and Frances to marry. The two eventually open a school together and have a child. After achieving financial security the family travels around England and then settles in the countryside, near to Mr Hunsden. Frances gives birth to a child, Victor.

Characters

- **William Crimsworth:** The protagonist, an orphaned child who is educated at [Eton College](#) after being taken in by his uncles. Rejecting their offer of a post as a clergyman, as he does not believe himself good enough for the role, he severs ties with them in order to walk in his late father's shoes and becomes a tradesman. His time in Yorkshire as a clerk for his cruel elder brother is short and he departs for Belgium, where he becomes a "professor" and meets his wife to be, who is a pupil of his. He is educated, religious and healthy, though not handsome.
- **Lord Tynedale / Hon. John Seacombe:** William's maternal uncles who attempt to set William up as Rector of Seacombe-cum-Scaife and to marry him off to one of his own cousins, "all of whom [he] greatly dislike[s]". William severs all ties with these relatives and little is related of them in the rest of the book.
- **Charles:** Seemingly William's only friend at Eton. William writes a letter to him detailing his activities since Eton and just after his first meeting with Edward at Crimsworth Hall. This letter serves as an introduction to the book. Charles does not reply to the letter, as he has already set off for one of the colonies. He is an [unseen character](#).
- **Edward Crimsworth:** William's tyrannical elder brother. He is an accomplished tradesman, owner of a [Yorkshire](#) mill, married and more handsome than his brother. Jealous of his sibling's education, he treats William cruelly. He later loses his wealth and wife, only to become rich again by the end of the book.
- **Hunsden Yorke Hunsden:** The man who frees William from his brother's clutches. He sets him up with contacts in Brussels and the two become good friends. He is a unique but not unattractive man whose taste in women is similar to William's, though he remains a lifelong bachelor.
- **Monsieur Francois Pelet:** The French headmaster of a boys' school in Belgium who employs William and becomes a good friend. He later betrays him to ensure the affection of Zoraïde Reuter, whom he later marries.

- **Mademoiselle Zoraïde Reuter:** The Catholic headmistress of the school in Belgium. William is initially attracted to her, though she is destined to marry Monsieur Pelet.
- **Frances Evans Henri:** A pupil-teacher at the school in Belgium where William Crimsworth finds himself. After the two fall in love they get married. They eventually move to England. She is a [Swiss](#) orphan of half -English extraction who was raised by her aunt.
- **Madame Reuter:** Zoraïde's mother
- **Madame Pelet:** Monsieur Pelet's mother
- **Eulalie, Hortense and Caroline:** Three coquettish students at Mademoiselle Reuter's school
- **Sylvie:** Another student
- **Jules Vanderkelkov:** A student at Monsieur Pelet's school
- **Victor Crimsworth:** Son of William and Frances Evans Henri.

Themes

Religion

Throughout the novel William looks down on [Catholics](#) and "Romish wizardcraft". Charlotte Brontë pictures the two main Catholic characters as treacherous and untrustworthy. William believes that Catholic training has a negative influence on the young girls at his school.

William has a certain snobbery against the [Flemish](#) and is disgusted by the way they butcher the English language as he attempts to teach them.

Context

The novel is based on Charlotte Brontë's experiences in [Brussels](#), where she studied as a language student and was a teacher in 1842. Much of the subject matter of *The Professor* was later reworked, from the perspective of a female teacher, into Brontë's later novel [Villette](#).

Poetry Foundation

Charlotte Brontë

{Ref: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/charlotte-bronte>}



One of the most famous Victorian women writers, and a prolific poet, Charlotte Brontë is best known for her novels, including *Jane Eyre* (1847), her most popular. Like her contemporary Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Brontë experimented with the poetic forms that became the characteristic modes of the Victorian period—the long narrative poem and the dramatic monologue—but unlike Browning, Brontë gave up writing poetry after the success of *Jane Eyre*. Included in this novel are the two songs by which most people know her poetry today. Brontë's decision to abandon poetry for novel writing exemplifies the dramatic shift in literary tastes and the marketability of literary genres—from poetry to prose fiction—that occurred in the 1830s and 1840s. Her experience as a poet thus reflects the dominant trends in early Victorian literary culture and demonstrates her centrality to the history of 19th-century literature.

Brontë was born on April 21, 1816 in the village of Thornton, West Riding, Yorkshire. Her father, Patrick Brontë, was the son of a respectable Irish farmer in County Down, Ireland. As the eldest son in a large family, Patrick normally would have found his life's work in managing the farm he was to inherit; instead, he first became a school teacher and a tutor and, having attracted the attention of a local patron, acquired training in the classics and was admitted to St. John's College at Cambridge in 1802. He graduated in 1806 and was ordained as a priest in the Church of England in 1807. In addition to writing the sermons he regularly delivered, Patrick Brontë was also a minor poet, publishing his first book of verse, *Cottage Poems*, in 1811. His rise from modest beginnings can be attributed largely to his considerable talent, hard work, and steady ambition—qualities his daughter Charlotte clearly inherited.

Charlotte's mother, Maria Branwell Brontë, died when her daughter was only five years old. Born to a prosperous tea merchant and grocer, Maria Branwell was raised in Penzance, Cornwall, married Patrick Brontë in 1812, bore six children in seven years—Maria (1813), Elizabeth (1815), Charlotte (1816), Patrick Branwell (1817), Emily (1818), and Anne (1820)—and died of cancer at the age of 38. Though the loss of their mother certainly made a difference in the lives of all the Brontë children, the younger ones—Charlotte, Branwell, Emily, and Anne—seem not to have been seriously affected by her death. A remarkably observant child with a good memory, Charlotte nevertheless remembered little of her mother; when, as an adult, she read letters that her mother had written to her father during their courtship, she wrote to a friend on February 16, 1850, "I wish She had lived and that I had known her."

During Maria Brontë's illness her sister, Elizabeth Branwell, came from Penzance to care for the family temporarily and, because Patrick Brontë's attempts to remarry after his wife's death were unsuccessful, she stayed until she died in 1842. "Aunt Branwell" has often been characterized as a gloomy and rigid Methodist who cast a pall of moral reproof over the lives of the little Brontës, but Charlotte's close friend Ellen Nussey remembered her in an 1871 memoir as "lively and intelligent" and capable of arguing "without fear" in conversations with her brother-in-law. She seems to have had more influence over Anne, who was still an infant when her aunt arrived in Haworth, than over the older children, who had considerable freedom in choosing their activities. Often left to their own devices, they played on the

wide expanse of moors that surrounded their parsonage home; they also read voraciously and engaged in the imaginative play that was to develop quickly into literary inventiveness.

Charlotte's eldest sister, Maria, appears to have been especially influential in the creative development of her siblings. Unusually bright and mature for a nine-year-old, Maria became somewhat of a companion to her father after her mother's death, reading to him and her siblings from the pages of Blackwood's Magazine. She also directed little dramas through which the children early developed skill at speaking in the voices of imagined characters. Under the tutelage of her father and at the encouragement of Maria, Charlotte, like her younger brother and sisters, was attracted to the literary life at an early age.

In 1824, when she was eight years old, Charlotte and Emily joined their older sisters at the newly opened Clergy Daughters' School at Cowan Bridge in the parish of Tunstall. Although later made infamous by Charlotte's scathing depiction of "Lowood School" in *Jane Eyre*, Cowan Bridge had, in fact, much to recommend it to Patrick Brontë's notice. Having five daughters and one son to educate on a small income, he clearly qualified as a "necessitous clergy" and, moreover, he would have found the mission of the school compatible with his expectations for his daughters. According to a December 1823 advertisement in the *Leeds Intelligencer*, the aim of the school was to provide a "plain and useful Education" that would allow young women "to maintain themselves in the different Stations of Life to which Providence may call them" and to offer "a more liberal Education for any who may be sent to be educated as Teachers and Governesses." Patrick Brontë's decision to send his four eldest daughters to Cowan Bridge thus reflects his concern for their material as well as intellectual and spiritual welfare, a concern that he passed on to Charlotte, who of the three Brontë sisters that survived to adulthood came to feel most anxious about her need to establish herself in a fulfilling and yet economically viable career.

Charlotte Brontë's earliest experience with school life could not have made teaching seem an attractive career. As Juliet Barker notes in *The Brontës* (1994), the record of her abilities in the school register hardly suggests that her potential was noticed: "Reads tolerably—Writes indifferently—Ciphers [arithmetic] a little and works [sews]

neatly. Knows nothing of Grammar, Geography, History or Accomplishments [such as music, drawing, French]." Since the assessment of every other student is essentially the same, the register tells little about Charlotte but certainly reveals that Cowan Bridge was unlikely to recognize individual talent, much less foster it. The evaluation concludes with a telling comment: "Altogether clever for her age but knows nothing systematically."

Charlotte found the rigors of boarding school life harsh in the extreme. Food was badly prepared under unsanitary conditions and, as a consequence, outbreaks of "low fever," or typhus, forced the withdrawal of many students, some of whom died. Maria developed consumption while at Cowan Bridge and was harshly treated during her incapacitating illness, an incident Charlotte drew upon in portraying Helen Burns's martyrdom at the hands of Miss Scatcherd in *Jane Eyre*. Patrick Brontë was not informed of his eldest daughter's condition until February 1825, two months after Maria began to show symptoms; when he saw her, he immediately withdrew her from the school and she died at home in early May. Elizabeth, in the meantime, had also fallen ill. When the entire school was temporarily removed on doctor's orders to a healthier site by the sea, Elizabeth was escorted back to Haworth where she died two weeks after Charlotte and Emily were brought home by their father on June 1.

The loss of Elizabeth and Maria profoundly affected Charlotte's life and probably helped shape her personality as well. Suddenly becoming the eldest child in a motherless family forced her into a position of leadership and instilled in her a sometimes almost overwhelming sense of responsibility, one that conflicted with a streak of rebelliousness and personal ambition. From this point on, Charlotte took the lead in the children's activities, a position of sibling dominance that she maintained throughout their lives and literary careers.

Following the tragic experience at Cowan Bridge, Patrick Brontë tutored his four remaining children at home and provided them with music and art instruction from competent teachers. The children were responsive scholars who also read avidly on their own and continued their imaginative play under Charlotte's direction. They were allowed to choose freely from their father's library, which included requisite family reading such as John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678–1684),

Hannah More's *Moral Sketches* (1784), John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667), Sir Walter Scott's *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805), James Thomson's *The Seasons* (1726–1730), and, of course, the Bible. The family regularly received *Blackwood's Magazine*, which heavily influenced Charlotte and Branwell's early writing, and, beginning in 1832, *Fraser's Magazine For Town and Country*, both lively and influential conservative periodicals with a heavy emphasis on literature. The Brontës also apparently had access to the library at Ponden House, a private residence nearby, and belonged to the *Keighley Mechanics' Institute* library as well as one or more of the local circulating libraries that carried popular contemporary novels and poetry.

The seminal event of the Brontës' literary apprenticeship occurred on June 5, 1826, when Mr. Brontë returned from a trip to Leeds with a present for Branwell—a box of toy soldiers—to which all four children immediately laid claim. Each child selected a soldier as his or her own and, naming them for their respective childhood heroes (Charlotte's was the Duke of Wellington), they began to construct plays and narratives around and through the voices of these characters. The earliest of such works were written in an almost microscopic hand in minuscule manuscripts so they would be compatible in size with their supposed authors—the toy soldiers.

Charlotte Brontë's juvenile tales revolve around the imagined adventures of the Duke of Wellington's two sons, Charles and Arthur Wellesley, and the social elite of "Glass Town," later transformed into the kingdom of "Angria." Arthur, soon elevated to the "Duke of Zamorna," is a recognizably Byronic hero who engages in romantic intrigues as well as in political treachery; his younger brother Charles is a less powerful, often humorous figure, who spies and reports on the scandalous doings of his Angrian compatriots—particularly his brother and his many paramours. Both Wellesleys are authors, and it is significant that Brontë's attractive but morally reprehensible Duke of Zamorna develops into the poet of the family while Charles emerges as a storyteller and her favorite narrator.

These early tales not only reveal the themes that preoccupied Brontë as a young writer and which reemerge in her adult writing—themes of romantic passion and sexual politics, desire, betrayal, loyalty, and revenge—but also reflect her early awareness of an issue central to

early Victorian literary culture: the concern that poetry writing was a self-indulgent and even morally questionable activity. Romantically alluring but destructively egotistical, Brontë's "self-centered" poet-*duke* is one of the means by which she represents her own early ambivalence about being a poet. This ambivalence—also experienced by male Victorian poets such as Alfred, Lord Tennyson, Robert Browning, and Matthew Arnold—was surely later intensified by social proscriptions against feminine subjectivity.

While the juvenile writings of the Brontës have been justly compared to fantasies, they were not merely uninformed imaginings. For example, early stories such as "A Romantic Tale," dated April 15, 1829, reflect the young writers' familiarity with articles on British colonizing in Africa published by Blackwood's Magazine in 1826 as well as more expected sources such as the Bible (especially the Book of Revelations), standard educational texts such as J. Goldsmith's *Grammar of General Geography* (1825), the works of Bunyan, the *Arabian Nights Entertainments*, and *Tales of the Genii* (1820) by Sir Charles Morell (pseudonym of James Ridley).

Characters in the children's stories debate contemporary issues such as the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829, indulge in political gossip about prominent figures such as the Duke of Wellington, and conduct military campaigns informed by the children's knowledge of actual military engagements such as the Peninsular War, 1808–1814. The fictitious setting for the tales, supposedly on the coast of West Africa, owes much to the popular oriental cityscape paintings of John Martin, and the Angrians are based on contemporary engravings that Charlotte patiently copied from such books as Finden's *Illustrations of the Life and Works of Lord Byron* (1833–1834) and popular annuals such as *The Literary Souvenir*.

By 1829 Branwell was "editing" Branwell's Blackwood's Magazine—the title changed, ironically, to Blackwood's Young Men's Magazine when Charlotte assumed editorship seven months later—and the two collaborators were producing tiny, hand-sewn volumes that imitate in striking detail Blackwood's *Edinburgh Magazine*, the original upon which they were based. Like their prototype, Charlotte and Branwell's magazines are gatherings of writings in various genres—plays, stories, poems, imagined conversations, letters, sketches, anecdotes, essays—and include the advertising, editorial notes, and information

about publication and marketing that are typically found in such periodicals. Reproducing the material form of Blackwood's Magazine, Charlotte and Branwell also engaged in literary gossip and controversies like those they learned about through their reading, filling the pages of their narratives with literary reviews and vituperative personal exchanges between Glass Town literati.

It was during this early period of playful yet intense immersion in make-believe literary life that Charlotte Brontë first experimented with poetry. Producing 65 poems and a satirical play about poetry writing in 1829–1830, the 14-year-old self-consciously attempted to define herself as a poet. Though most of these early poems have a Glass Town context, being embedded within her narratives and spoken or sung by fictitious characters, some are only loosely connected to the stories. Many are interesting in that they reveal Brontë's exposure to current literary debates such as those concerning "neglected genius," the role of tradition and imitation versus originality and inspiration, and the public reception of poetry in a changing literary economy. The various poetic forms that Brontë experimented with during this time reflect her self-designed apprenticeship through imitation of earlier poets. For example, her many descriptions of natural landscapes are indebted to the 18th-century topographical poem that had been developed by "nature poets" such as James Thomson and William Wordsworth. Also, the influence of the popular Thomas Moore can be seen in Brontë's many poems written as songs.

Brontë deliberately imitates Thomas Gray's "Progress of Poetry" (1754) in "The Violet," dated November 14, 1830, in which she traces the history of Western literature beginning with Homer and then beseeches admission to that "bright band" of poets who have preceded her:

Hail army of immortals hail!
Oh Might I neath your banners march!
Though faint my lustre faint & pale
Scarce seen amid the glorious arch

Yet joy deep joy would fill my heart
Nature unveil thy awful face
To me a poets pow'r impart
Thoug[h] humble be my destined place

Such an early poem of course reflects Brontë's poetic immaturity as well as her enthusiasm for her chosen métier. In other pieces Brontë shows the ability to view her own literary pretensions with humorous detachment. She concludes one lushly descriptive poem with the self-deflating observation that "such a charming dogge[re] / as this was never wrote / not even by the mighty / & high Sir Walter Scott."

Although the early poems contain visionary, lyre-playing bards and other Romantic poet-figures, Brontë in her stories and plays repeatedly satirizes the romantic conception of the poet as a self-inspired original genius. She deploys parodic characters, such as Henry Rhymer in "The Poetaster," a story dated July 6–12, 1830, to debunk her own romantic posturing and that of her siblings. "The Poetaster" also humorously depicts the changing literary culture of England in the 1830s, a time when technological advances in printing allowed for the entry of many new writers into the literary marketplace. The "noble profession [of authorship] is dishonoured," wails a Glass Town publisher who soon expects to see "every child that walks along the streets, bearing its manuscripts in its hand, going to the printers for publication." Making fun of her own and her siblings' precocious literary aspirations, Brontë shows a good-humored awareness of both the opportunities and the complexities involved in pursuing a literary career in her day.

This spate of poetic production was interrupted in January 1831, when Brontë left Haworth for a second time, traveling 20 miles to become a student at Roe Head School in Mirfield, near Dewsbury. Owned and run by Margaret Wooler, whom her father called a "clever, decent, and motherly woman," Roe Head was a small school that usually enrolled only about seven boarding students at a time, all girls around the same age, and therefore was able to attend closely to the needs and abilities of individuals. Although Brontë was initially homesick and isolated from the other students because of her differences from them—her outdated dress, slightly eccentric behavior occasioned by poor eyesight and timidity, and her ignorance of grammar and geography as well as her precocious knowledge of literature and the visual arts—in time she won the respect and affection of her peers and came to feel quite at home in her new school environment.

At Roe Head, Brontë made two contrasting yet equally enduring friendships. One friend was Ellen Nussey, an entirely conventional and affectionately loyal girl with whom Brontë corresponded throughout her life. After the writer's death, Nussey jealously guarded her friend's reputation, in part by heavily editing her letters. Brontë's other friend, Mary Taylor, was as radical as Nussey was conservative. Boisterous, intelligently opinionated, and more intellectual than Nussey, Taylor apparently appealed to the bright, rebellious, and ambitious side of Brontë. Late in her life Taylor published *The First Duty of Women*

(1870), in which she argued that the first priority for women should be to prepare to support themselves financially. She had acted upon this conviction in 1845 by immigrating to New Zealand, where she ran a successful business as a shopkeeper until she returned to England in 1860 to live out her life in comfortable economic independence. It is unfortunate that only one of the many letters that Brontë wrote to Taylor survives.

Although she was considerably behind most of the other girls when she entered the school, Brontë quickly moved to the top of the class and stayed there until she left 18 months later, carrying away several prizes and medals awarded for outstanding academic achievement. Often continuing her studies while the other girls were relaxing at the end of the day, Brontë apparently recognized that her education was a necessary investment in the future: she was not attending Miss Wooler's establishment merely to gain polish but rather to train herself for a career as a governess. Due to her dedication to her studies she wrote only three poems during her time at the school.

After her departure from Roe Head in May 1832, the rather uneventful round of life at Haworth, where she was in charge of her younger sisters' educations, eventually led Brontë back to the exciting world of Angria and the occupation of writing. From 1833 to 1834 she produced approximately 2,200 lines of poetry, most of it tightly embedded within the context of the passionate tales that she and Branwell were spinning around the political and romantic experiences of their beloved Angrians. Many of these poems are songs whose meaning and effect depend on a knowledge not only of the subject matter alluded to but also of the singer's character and the situation in which the lyric is sung. Other poems are lengthy narratives that develop the Angrian saga, deepening and sometimes complicating the plots developed in the accompanying prose narratives. These poems are formally more competent than the ones she produced prior to her stay at Roe Head, but they also show less willingness to experiment with poetic form and more absorption in the characters and content of the tales. The literary self-reflectiveness of her earlier writing gave way to an almost total absorption in the Angrian world of fantasy, with its emphasis on military conflict (largely Branwell's contribution) and romantic betrayal (Charlotte's main interest).

The few exceptions to Brontë's Angrian writings include a group of poems written in normal-sized script on lined paper, apparently from the same notebook, and preceded by instructions from her father: "All that is written in this book, must be in a good, plain and legible hand. PB." Several of these non-Angrian poems—"Richard Coeur de Lion & Blondel," "Death of Darius Codomanus," and "Saul"—may suggest that Brontë recognized the need to develop a public poetic mode to complement the private writing she and her siblings indulged in their

literary fantasies. Thus, evidence of conflict in Brontë's poetry emerges in a way that connects literary differences—in poetic modes, voices, subject matters, even penmanship—with a perceived division between the private life of communication with a coterie audience, her siblings, and a public life of responsibility to authority figures, such as her father and teachers (the poems on historical and Biblical figures are similar to school exercises she later wrote in Brussels). This division eventually led Brontë to abandon poetry for prose fiction, but not until she had gained significant poetic skill and struggled through much anxiety related to this perceived conflict between the lure of the private imagination and the call of public duty.

The decision that Brontë should return to Roe Head as a teacher in July 1835 certainly contributed to this anxiety since there was little opportunity to "play out" the Angrian tales at Miss Wooler's school. As her journal testifies, Brontë grew increasingly resentful of what she saw as her "wretched bondage" to the teaching profession, with its long hours, lack of privacy, and tedious duties. She was able to write only in snatches and during vacations, so it is not surprising that her rate of production at this period fell well below that of her partner, Branwell, who installed himself in a Halifax studio with the intent of earning his living as a portrait painter and who found considerable time for both writing and socializing.

Brontë's poems after her return to Roe Head reflect her longing for home and for Angria as well as her anxious need to reconcile her desire to write with the necessity of continuing to teach to earn a living. The most famous of these poems, sometimes anthologized as "Retrospection," begins poignantly:

We wove a web in childhood
A web of sunny air
We dug a spring in infancy
Of water pure and fair
We sowed in youth a mustard seed
We cut an almond rod
We are now grown up to riper age
Are they withered in the sod ...

The poem continues for 177 more lines, developing into vividly realized scenes featuring the Duke of Zamorna. The poem then breaks into a retrospective prose narrative that is rudely interrupted by "a voice that dissipated all the charm" as a student "thrust her little rough black head into [her teacher's] face" to demand, "Miss Brontë what are you thinking about?"—a striking example of the incompatibility of Brontë's inner, imaginative life with her actual experience while at Roe Head.

Gradually, Brontë was able to resume a pace of writing comparable to that of her earlier productive times, but even when she was writing prolifically there is evidence of distraction and dissatisfaction. The stories of 1836, for example, show that she was often unable to settle on a subject or identify new topics to write about, and many poems from this period end abruptly or trail off rather than draw to a close. Poems such as "But Once Again ...," dated January 19, 1836, explicitly articulate Brontë's concern about the conflict between the demands of her teaching career and her desire for romantic, social, and intellectual stimulation, which she associated with the imaginary world of Angria and, especially, with her poet-duke, who emerges as an enthralling poetic muse in the poem:

I mean Zamorna!

... he has been a mental King
That ruled my thoughts right regally
And he has given me a steady spring
To what I had of poetry.

... I've heard his accents sweet & stern
Speak words of kindled wrath to me
When dead as dust in funeral urn
Sank every note of melody
And I was forced to wake again
The silent song the slumbering strain.
... to his altar I am bound
For him the consecrated ground
My pilgrim steps have trod

... grovelling in the dust I fall
Where Adrian's shrine lamps dazzling glow ...

In December of 1836 Brontë decided to try her hand at professional writing, with the hope of earning her living as a publishing poet. To this end she sought the advice of no less a figure than Robert Southey, then poet laureate of England, to whom she sent a selection of her poems. The discouraging response in his letter of March 12, 1837 has become infamous:

Literature cannot be the business of a woman's life: & it ought not to be. The more she is engaged in her proper duties, the less leisure she will have for it, even as an accomplishment & a recreation. To those duties you have not yet been called, & when you are you will be less eager for celebrity.

Brontë's reply to Southey and the fact that she preserved his letter in a wrapper inscribed "Southey's Advice | To be kept forever" seem to

suggest that she took it to heart, but her prodigious literary output during this period, particularly of poetry, tells a different story. Between January 1837 and July 1838, Brontë wrote more than 60 poems and verse fragments, including drafts of what were eventually to be some of her best poetical works. However, they remained fragmentary and defective; it was not until 1845 that she was able to revise them into poems she was willing to publish.

Brontë left Roe Head for good in December 1838 and spent the next four years attempting to reconcile her need to earn a living with her desire to remain at Haworth and write. She accepted two positions as a governess, working for the Sidgwick family in nearby Lothersdale from May to July in 1839 and for the Whites at Upperwood House in Rawdon from March to December 1841. Both experiences ended badly, largely because she could not accommodate herself to her situation. On March 3, 1841 she confided to Nussey:

... no one but myself can tell how hard a governess's work is to me—for no one but myself is aware how utterly averse my whole mind and nature are to the employment. Do not think that I fail to blame myself for this, or that I leave any means unemployed to conquer this feeling. Some of my greatest difficulties lie in things that would appear to you comparatively trivial. ... I am a fool. Heaven knows I cannot help it!

In the summer of 1841 Brontë began negotiations for a loan from Aunt Branwell to establish a school that she and her sisters might operate. In December she declined Miss Wooler's generous proposal that she replace her as director of Roe Head, turning down a fine opportunity to take charge of an established school with a good reputation. This remarkably bad business decision is explained by her having become committed in the meantime to a new and more exciting plan suggested to her by Mary Taylor: that she and Emily attend school on the Continent in order to improve their command of French and Italian, and acquire "a dash of German" so to attract students to the school they would open upon their return. Inspired by Taylor's descriptions of Europe and emboldened by the Taylors' presence in Brussels, where she intended to study, on September 29, 1841 Brontë wrote a letter to Aunt Branwell in a manner characteristic of her self-confident mood:

I feel an absolute conviction that, if this advantage were allowed us, it would be the making of us for life. Papa will

perhaps think it a wild and ambitious scheme; but who ever rose in the world without ambition? When he left Ireland to go to Cambridge University, he was as ambitious as I am now. I want us all to go on. I know we have talents, and I want them to be turned to account.

Charlotte and Emily Brontë left England in February 1842 to enroll as the oldest students in a school run by Madame Claire Zoë Heger and her husband, Constantin. English and Protestant in a school of Roman Catholic Belgians, the Brontës were isolated from their younger peers by differences in language, culture, age, and faith, not to mention Emily's austere reserve and Charlotte's social timidity. Although both young women made considerable academic progress in Brussels and were praised for their success, neither ever felt entirely comfortable there, and when they went back to Haworth for Aunt Branwell's funeral in November 1842, Emily chose not to return to Brussels.

For Charlotte Brontë, though, there was an attraction at the Pensionnat Heger beyond the opportunity for academic achievement; or rather, such achievement was inextricably involved for her with the attractive presence of Constantin Heger. He was an excellent teacher of literature, who, unlike Southey, encouraged Brontë's literary talent, giving her close, individual attention and challenging her to clarify her thinking about writing as well as to refine her writing skills. In the essays she wrote under Heger's direction, Brontë returned to the literary issues raised in her earliest poems with a new sense of urgency. To her Romantic insistence on the spontaneity of poetic "genius, [which] produces without work," Heger wrote extensive marginal notes, arguing for the neoclassical values of control, learning, and imitation. He did not simply dismiss Romantic ideas about genius and poetic creativity as Brontë had often done when she was younger; rather, he took such arguments seriously and patiently explained the need for mechanical expertise and careful craftsmanship in her writing.

Although she apparently composed little new poetry in Brussels, Brontë did continue to transcribe revised versions of earlier poems into a copybook she had brought with her from Haworth, an indication that she may have been contemplating publishing them in the future. Encouraged in her literary efforts as she had never been before, Brontë's regard for Heger quickly developed into a grateful infatuation with the man whom she addressed in a July 24, 1844 letter as "my literature master ... the only master that I have ever had." Understandably, Madame Heger soon tried to put some distance between her husband and his interesting English pupil. Hurt and angry, Brontë withdrew from the Belgian school in January 1844 and

returned to England nursing her wounded pride and unrequited affections.

The letters she wrote to Heger from Haworth in 1844 painfully display her feelings for "Monsieur," while at the same time they reveal Brontë's increasing anxiety about establishing herself in a fulfilling line of work. Always troubled by extreme nearsightedness, she experienced a temporary further weakening of her sight at this time, writing Heger, a bit histrionically, that since too much writing would result in blindness "a literary career is closed to me--only that of teaching is open to me." In November the Brontë sisters abandoned their plan for opening a school in Haworth since not one prospective applicant had responded to their advertisements. The eldest Brontë's prospects—romantic, professional, and literary—seemed dim indeed, and she sank into a state of hopeless lethargy.

Brontë suddenly recovered from this period of enervating depression in the fall of 1845, when she stumbled upon a notebook of Emily's poems. As she remarked in her "Biographical Notice" to the 1850 edition of *Wuthering Heights*, she recognized that these were "not common effusions, nor at all like the poetry women generally write." She eagerly pressed her sister to publish her poems with a selection of her own verse, to which were added poems contributed by Anne. The sisters agreed to publish the poems pseudonymously (perhaps at Emily and Anne's insistence), and Charlotte Brontë energetically set about the task of finding a publisher for *Poems by Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell* (1846), which the small London firm of Aylott & Jones agreed to print at the authors' expense, a common practice for unknown writers.

Charlotte Brontë cheerfully took sole responsibility for corresponding with their publisher and for seeing the *Poems* through the press; as she later recorded in the "Biographical Notice," "the mere effort to succeed had given a wonderful zest to existence; it must be pursued." Her enthusiasm for the business end of authorship, as well for its creative aspect, demonstrates her determination to succeed as a professional author in the literary economy of early Victorian England—a quality that she shared with successful contemporaries such as her future biographer, Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell. It is a quality that also explains why she wrote almost no poetry after 1845 and why she was already attempting to secure a contract for her first novel, *The Professor* (1857), before the *Poems* had even appeared in print.

Unlike her sisters' contributions, nearly all of Charlotte Brontë's poems in the 1846 volume are reworkings of much earlier compositions, mostly from the prolific period of 1837–1838, which she revised expressly for publication in this volume. In preparing her poems

Brontë not only deleted all references to their original narrative contexts, as her sisters did for their “Gondal poems”; she additionally changed them to suit her new readership, invoking popular motifs (such as the sailor’s return in “The Wife’s Will”) and expressing sentiments that were culturally resonant in 1846. For example, “Pilate’s Wife’s Dream”—originally a monologue spoken by the Duchess of Zamorna in a quite different fictitious situation—concludes with lines that anticipate the final affirmation of faith expressed in Tennyson’s *In Memoriam* (1850):

I feel a firmer trust--a higher hope
Rise in my soul--it dawns with dawning day;
.....
Ere night descends, I shall more surely know
What guide to follow, in what path to go;
I wait in hope--I wait in solemn fear,
The oracle of God--the sole--true God--to hear.

The poems that Brontë chose to present to the public in 1846 were not composed spontaneously and “without work” but deliberately altered to suit their new environment and purpose—a sure sign that Brontë had begun to modify her romantic notions about literary genius and accommodate herself to the demands of professional authorship.

Because Charlotte Brontë’s poems are longer than those of her sisters, she contributed only 19 to their 21 each, so that each writer is given approximately the same amount of space in the book. Each poem is clearly attributed to either “Currer,” “Ellis,” or “Acton,” and the contributions by the three are presented alternately, so that no one poet dominates any portion of the volume. The effect invites comparison between the three writers and makes Emily’s superiority as a poet noticeable.

The arrangement of the poems also obscures a coherence between Charlotte Brontë’s poems, many of which are connected through continuing narrative lines and/or through consistencies in character. For example, four of her poems—“The Wife’s Will,” “The Wood,” “Regret,” and “Apostasy”—together constitute a single story of an English wife who chooses to accompany her husband into political exile in France, where she affirms at the end of her life a loyalty to her native faith, the religion of romantic love:

’Tis my religion thus to love,
My creed thus fixed to be;
Not Death shall shake, nor Priestcraft break
My rock-like constancy!

Presented through extended monologues, this story effectively develops the character of the speaker through four dramatically realized situations in which she addresses an implied audience—William in the first three poems, a French-Catholic priest in the last. These poems thus resemble both the long narrative poem that was to become popular in Victorian England—Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh* (1857), for example—but also the dramatic monologue, perhaps the most distinctively Victorian poetic form, one refined by poets like Tennyson and the Brownings. Other Brontë monologues include "Frances," "The Missionary," "Pilate's Wife's Dream," and "The Teacher's Monologue."

Some of Brontë's poems are clearly lyrical—the companion pieces "Evening Solace" and "Winter Stores," for example—but most of the poems have a narrative component. Such narrative poems as "Gilbert" and "Mementoes," include Gothic elements like those that made *Jane Eyre* so popular; other poems, such as "The Letter," use precise imagery and details of setting to project a character's state of mind into his or her external environment, much as she did later in her novels and as Tennyson did in poems such as "Mariana." Others are linked together through narrative compatibility: for instance, "Preference" seems to be an indignant woman's response to the aggressive declaration of love asserted by the male speaker of her preceding poem, "Passion"; and "Gilbert" seems to be exactly the kind of arrogant lover who seduced and betrayed "Frances," whose troubled monologue precedes the story in which he is brought to retributive justice (though his victim is identified as "Elinor").

The sense of coherence in Charlotte Brontë's published poems derives in part, of course, from their common origin in the juvenile writings, which initiated the themes that appear so often in her novels; but their unity is also due to formal similarities based on a new purpose in her writing: to develop characters that are psychologically interesting through monologues and narratives that reveal personality within the context of dramatic situation. This purpose links the poems that Brontë published in 1846 to the dominant poetic modes of the Victorian period—the long narrative poem and the dramatic monologue—as well as to the literary form by which she ultimately became identified as an author in the public sphere: the novel.

Though Brontë made every effort to publicize *Poems*, paying for advertising and requesting that Aylott & Jones send review copies to fourteen periodicals, the volume sold poorly—only two copies in the first year—and received only three reviews, which were, however, rather favorable. Originally priced at four shillings, the volume was republished by the publishers of *Jane Eyre* in 1848, and received more insightful critical attention after the publication of Gaskell's *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* in 1857. Though most critics have acknowledged the superiority of Emily Brontë's poems, a few reviews published in 1848 to 1849, when

Jane Eyre was selling very well, favored Charlotte Brontë's; for example, the anonymous reviewer for the November 10, 1849 *Britannia* praised her "mastery in the art of word painting" and her "faculty of exhibiting in words the shadowy images of mental agony." E.S. Dallas, in a July 1857 review in *Blackwood's Magazine*, remarked that her poetry is distinguished from that of her sisters' by her "faculty of forgetting herself, and talking of things and persons exterior to herself"—a quality shared by novelists and poets who write in the narrative and dramatic monologue forms. Brontë, however, adamantly agreed with those who thought her sister's poetry superior, and in a September 26, 1850 letter to Gaskell she dismissed her own contributions to the 1846 volume as "juvenile productions; the restless effervescence of a mind that would not be still."

In 1847, before she had secured her public reputation as a novelist, Brontë sent presentation copies of *Poems* to several important literary figures—a common strategy for unknown authors who wished to attract the attention of influential critics. She also persistently tried to publish her first novel, *The Professor*, which was rejected nine times before she received an encouraging reply from the firm of Smith, Elder, who declined to publish the book but asked to review any other novel she might be working on. Heartened by this request, Brontë finished *Jane Eyre* rapidly—in about two weeks—and had the satisfaction of seeing the novel in print shortly thereafter. The book was immediately popular and "Currer Bell" quickly became known by the reading public as "the author of *Jane Eyre*."

After the success of her novel, Brontë wrote no poetry except for three unfinished poems on the occasions of her sisters' deaths. Though greatly saddened by the tragically early deaths of Branwell (September 24, 1848), Emily (December 19, 1848), and Anne (May 28, 1849), she continued to publish novels—*Shirley* in 1849, *Villette* in 1853—and enjoyed stimulating literary correspondences with several people, including George Henry Lewes and William Smith Williams, the perceptive and kindly reader for her publishing firm, Smith, Elder. Letting her identity become known, she achieved the literary celebrity that Southey had warned her to eschew and became acquainted with several important authors, including William Makepeace Thackeray, Harriett Martineau, and Gaskell. At the age of 38, Brontë married her father's curate, Arthur Bell Nichols and died, possibly of either hyperemesis gravidarum (severe vomiting caused by pregnancy) or a serious infection of the digestive tract, on March 31, 1855. She is buried, along with the rest of her remarkable family (except for Anne, who died in the seaside town of Scarborough), in the Church of St. Michael and All Angels, immediately across from her parsonage home.

Charlotte Brontë was not a successful poet in her own day, and today she is still rightfully known for her novels rather than for her poems. The inevitable comparisons between Emily's terse romantic lyrics and her sister's more discursive poetic style have produced a lower estimate of her poems than they probably deserve. "Pilate's Wife's Dream," for

example, is arguably a much better poetic monologue than Elizabeth Barrett Browning's well-known "The Runaway Slave at Pilgrim's Point." Brontë is an important figure in the history of 19th-century poetry because her career illustrates the shift in literary tastes from poetry to prose fiction and because she employed, sometimes quite skillfully, the poetic modes that became characteristic of the Victorian period.

If one agrees with Virginia Woolf's claim in "'Jane Eyre' and 'Wuthering Heights'" that Charlotte Brontë's novels are read "for her poetry," one might argue that Brontë never did entirely abandon her career as a poet. Adapting her creative impulses to the demands of the market, Brontë incorporated poetic features into the more viable form of the novel, and so became a successful literary professional in Victorian England and a "major author" in the accepted canon of British literature.

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Charlotte Brontë: A Wish for Wings

Erin Nyborg

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Charlotte Brontë (1816-1855) was born on April 21, 1816, the third daughter of Rev. Patrick and Maria Brontë, and was followed by Branwell (1817), Emily (1818), and Anne (1820). In 1820, the family moved to Haworth in the west riding of Yorkshire. Soon after, the Brontë children lost their mother to cancer and their two eldest sisters to tuberculosis. Charlotte would survive her younger siblings and out of a life of personal loss and hard struggle, became one of the greatest novelists the world has ever seen.

The Brontë sisters hoped to leave their positions as governesses and set up their own school. To this end, Charlotte and Emily went to Brussels in 1842 for further instruction in French. There, Charlotte received individual attention from her teacher, Constantin Heger. Charlotte returned to Haworth in 1844 and wrote passionate, yearning letters to her beloved (but married) teacher:

'I will not resign myself to the total loss of my master's friendship - I would rather undergo the greatest bodily pains than have my heart constantly lacerated by searing regrets'. [A]

The school scheme never materialised, as pupils could not be found. Charlotte soon set herself a new challenge: publication. The Brontë children had written from a young age and in 1846 the Brontë sisters published (pseudonymously) Poems by Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell, though only two copies were sold. Even before *Poems* was published, Charlotte was attempting to find a publisher for 'three distinct and unconnected tales': Emily's Wuthering Heights, Anne's Agnes Grey, and Charlotte's first novel, The Professor, which remained unpublished until 1857, after her death. [B]

Despite these failures, Charlotte began a second novel, Jane Eyre (1847), which featured the journey of a passionate, orphaned child to independence, family, and love. It was the first published of the sisters' novels and was extremely popular, read by Queen Victoria (twice) and one of Charlotte's literary heroes, W.M. Thackeray. Reviewers could be more scathing, such as, Elizabeth Rigby who wrote:

'We do not hesitate to say that the tone of the mind and thought which has overthrown authority and violated every code human and divine abroad, and fostered Chartism and rebellion at home, is the same which has also written Jane Eyre'. [C]

As Charlotte was working on her third novel, *Shirley*, Branwell, Emily, and Anne died. The third volume of the novel was written as Charlotte grieved. She sent the completed manuscript to W.S. Williams, her publisher's reader, for much-needed comment, as Charlotte had lost her two best readers in losing her sisters.

In [Shirley](#) (1849), Charlotte broadened her scope to look at contemporary social issues such as industrialisation, Chartism, and the 'Woman Question' through the lens of the Luddite riots and machine-breaking at the end of the Napoleonic wars. *Shirley* herself was a dramatized version of Emily Brontë, a strong, mystically feminist character who attempts to play a man's role in society.

Charlotte's final novel [Villette](#) (1853) is, like [The Professor](#), a Brussels school story and is narrated by Lucy Snowe, whose painfully self-contained psyche drove Matthew Arnold to complain that it was 'a hideous undelightful convulsed constricted novel'. [D] George Eliot, not yet then a novelist, loved it. Lucy, like Charlotte, begins the novel as a student in a *pensionnat* and then becomes a teacher, winning the love of her 'master' M. Paul Emanuel.

In 1854, Charlotte married her father's curate, Rev. Arthur Bell Nicholls, and in March, 1855 she died, possibly in early pregnancy.

While Charlotte will always be remembered for the losses she endured and for the gloomy isolation Haworth Parsonage seems to embody, what remains most inspiring are the four novels Charlotte left behind, especially *Jane Eyre* and the richly psychological *Villette*.

References

- [A] Charlotte Brontë, 'To Constantin Heger, 8 January 1845: Translation', in *The Letters of Charlotte Brontë*, ed. by Margaret Smith, 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995-2005), I, pp. 379-380 (p. 379).
[B] Brontë, 'To Messrs Aylott and Jones, 6 April 1846', *Letters*, p. 461.
[C] Elizabeth Rigby, 'From an Unsigned Review, Quarterly Review', in *The Brontës: The Critical Heritage*, ed. by Miriam Allott (London: Routledge, 1974), pp. 109-110.
[D] Matthew Arnold, 'Letter to Arthur Hugh Clough, 21 March 1853', in *The Letters of Matthew Arnold to Arthur Hugh Clough*, ed. by Howard Foster Lowry (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), p. 132.

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Adaptations of *Jane Eyre*

{https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adaptations_of_Jane_Eyre}

Jane Eyre, the 1847 novel by English writer [Charlotte Brontë](#), has frequently been adapted for film, radio, television, and theatre, and has also inspired a number of rewritings and reinterpretations.

Film



[Irma Taylor](#) as [Jane](#) and [Charles Compton](#) as [John Reed](#) in the [Thanhouser Company's *Jane Eyre*](#) (1910)



[Mabel Ballin](#) in *Jane Eyre* (1921), directed by [Hugo Ballin](#)



Orson Welles and Joan Fontaine in *Jane Eyre* (1943),
directed by Robert Stevenson

Silent films

- 1910: *Jane Eyre*, starring Irma Taylor (Jane), Marie Eline (Young Jane), and Frank Hall Crane (Rochester)
- 1914: *Jane Eyre*, starring Lisbeth Blackstone, Dallas Tyler, Harrish Ingraham, and John Charles
- 1914: *Jane Eyre*, directed by Frank Hall Crane, starring Ethel Grandin (Jane) and Irving Cummings (Rochester)
- 1915: *Jane Eyre*, starring Louise Vale
- 1915: *The Castle of Thornfield*, produced in Italy
- 1918: *Woman and Wife*, adapted by Paul West, directed by Edward José, starring Alice Brady
- 1921: *Jane Eyre*, directed by Hugo Ballin, starring Norman Trevor and Mabel Ballin
- 1926: *Orphan of Lowood*, produced in Germany, directed by Curtis Bernhardt

Sound films

- 1934: *Jane Eyre*, starring Colin Clive and Virginia Bruce
- 1943: *I Walked with a Zombie*, a Val Lewton horror movie loosely based on *Jane Eyre*, starring Tom Conway and Frances Dee
- 1943: *Jane Eyre*, screenplay by John Houseman and Aldous Huxley, starring Orson Welles (Rochester), Joan Fontaine (Jane), Agnes Moorehead (Mrs. Reed), Margaret O'Brien (Adele), Peggy Ann Garner (Young Jane), and Elizabeth Taylor (Helen Burns). Fontaine also starred in Alfred Hitchcock's 1940 film *Rebecca*, based upon the Daphne du Maurier novel influenced by *Jane Eyre*.
- 1952: *Sangdil* (also known as *Jane Eyre*), an Indian Hindi-language version directed by R. C. Talwar, starring Madhubala.
- 1956: *The Orphan Girl*, from Hong Kong
- 1962: *The Man I Love*, from Egypt, directed by Hussein Hilmy El Mohandes and starring Magda al Sabahi and Yehia Chahine
- 1963: *El Secreto* (English: "The Secret"), released in Mexico
- 1968: *Bedi Bandavalu*, Indian Kannada-language film adaptation directed by C. Srinivasan, starring Chandrakala and Kalyan Kumar in the lead roles.

- 1970: *Jane Eyre*, starring [George C. Scott](#) and [Susannah York](#); released in theatres in Europe but direct-to-TV in the U.S. in 1971
- 1972: *Shanti Nilayam*, an Indian adaptation in [Tamil](#) directed by G.S. Mani, starring [Kanchana](#)
- 1972: *Shanti Nilayam*, an Indian adaptation in [Telugu](#) directed by C. Vaikuntarama Sastry, starring [Anjali Devi](#)
- 1996: *Jane Eyre*, directed by [Franco Zeffirelli](#), starring [William Hurt](#) (Rochester), [Charlotte Gainsbourg](#) (Jane), [Elle Macpherson](#) (Blanche Ingram), [Joan Plowright](#) (Mrs. Fairfax), [Anna Paquin](#) (Young Jane), [Fiona Shaw](#) (Mrs. Reed), and [Geraldine Chaplin](#) (Miss Scatcherd)
- 1997: *Jane Eyre*, directed by [Robert Young](#), starring [Ciarán Hinds](#) and [Samantha Morton](#)
- 2011: *Jane Eyre*, directed by [Cary Fukunaga](#), starring [Mia Wasikowska](#) (Jane), [Michael Fassbender](#) (Rochester), and [Judi Dench](#) (Mrs. Fairfax)

Radio

A 1949 adaptation for *NBC University Theatre*, starring [Deborah Kerr](#)

- 1938: *The Mercury Theatre on the Air*, 18 September 1938, with Orson Welles and music by [Bernard Herrmann](#); the acetate recording was irreparably damaged by its use in preparing the 1943 motion picture
- 1940: *The Campbell Playhouse*, 31 March 1940, with Orson Welles and [Madeleine Carroll](#)
- 1941: *The Screen Guild Theater*, 2 March 1941, with [Brian Aherne](#) and [Bette Davis](#)
- 1944: *The Philco Radio Hall of Fame*, 13 February 1944, an "impression" by [Joan Fontaine](#) (20:40–32:20)
- 1944: *The Lux Radio Theatre*, 5 June 1944, with Orson Welles and [Loretta Young](#)
- 1944: *Matinee Theater*, 3 December 1944, with [Victor Jory](#) and [Gertrude Warner](#)
- 1946: *The Mercury Summer Theatre of the Air*, 28 June 1946, adapted by [Norman Corwin](#), with Orson Welles and [Alice Frost](#)
- 1948: *The Lux Radio Theatre*, 14 June 1948, with [Ingrid Bergman](#) and [Robert Montgomery](#)
- 1949: *NBC University Theatre*
- 1994: *Jane Eyre*, British radio, January 1994, with [Ciarán Hinds](#)
- 1994 "BBC Radio Presents Jane Eyre" (Abridged) AudioBook (4 audiocassettes); ISBN 9780553473971; Running Time: 240 minutes; Performance by Juliet Stevenson; Bantam Doubleday Dell; BBC Enterprises;
- 2009: *Jane Eyre*, British radio, August 2009
- 2016: *Jane Eyre*, [BBC Radio 4](#) as ten 15-minute episodes, from 29 February 2016
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Television

- 1949: *Studio One in Hollywood – Jane Eyre*, 12 December 1949, with [Charlton Heston](#) and [Mary Sinclair](#)
- 1952: *Studio One in Hollywood – Jane Eyre*, 4 August 1952, with [Kevin McCarthy](#) and [Katharine Bard](#)
- 1956: *Jane Eyre*, a [BBC](#) series starring [Stanley Baker](#) and [Daphne Slater](#)
- 1957: *Jane Eyre*, an [NBC Matinee Theatre](#) production starring [Patrick Macnee](#) and Joan Elan
- 1957: *Jane Eyre*, italiano miniserie televisiva, starting [Raf Vallone](#) and [Ilaria Occhini](#)
- 1961: *Jane Eyre*, a TV movie directed by [Marc Daniels](#) starring [Sally Ann Howes](#) and [Zachary Scott](#)
- 1963: *Jane Eyre*, a [BBC](#) series starring [Richard Leech](#) and [Ann Bell](#). Episodes 2 and 3 are missing, believed lost.
- 1970: *Jane Eyre*, starring [George C. Scott](#) and [Susannah York](#); direct-to-TV in the U.S. but given theatrical release in Europe (also listed above)
- 1971: *Jane Eyre*, part of [Novela \(TVE\)](#), starring [María Luisa Merlo](#) as Jane and [Rafael Arcos](#) as Rochester, there are 15 episodes total with a run time of 372min total.
- 1972: *Jana Eyrová*, produced by [Czechoslovak television](#), starring [Marta Vančurová](#) (Jane) and [Jan Kačer](#) (Rochester)
- 1973: *Jane Eyre*, a [BBC](#) series starring [Sorcha Cusack](#) (Jane), [Michael Jayston](#) (Rochester), [Juliet Waley](#) (Young Jane), and [Tina Heath](#) (Helen Burns); much of the dialogue is taken directly from the original novel
- 1978: *Telenovela – Ardiente secreto* (English: *The Impassioned Secret*), a 20-part serial novel broadcast in Mexico
- 1982: *BBC Classics Presents: Jane Eyrehead*, a parody by [SCTV](#) starring [Andrea Martin](#) (Jane Eyrehead), [Joe Flaherty](#) (Rochester), [John Candy](#), [Eugene Levy](#) and [Martin Short](#)
- 1983: *Jane Eyre*, a [BBC](#) series starring [Zelah Clarke](#) (Jane), [Timothy Dalton](#) (Rochester), [Sian Pattenden](#) (Young Jane) and [Colette Barker](#) (Helen Burns), directed by [Julian Charles Becket Amyes](#)
- 1995: *Persistence of Vision (Star Trek: Voyager)*
- 1996: *Ruk Diow Kong Jenjira*, a [Thai TV drama](#) on [Channel 3](#), starring [Willie McIntosh](#) and [Sirilak Pongchoke](#).
- 1997: *Jane Eyre*, an [ITV](#) film starring [Ciarán Hinds](#) and [Samantha Morton](#)
- 2006: *Jane Eyre*, a [BBC](#) series starring [Ruth Wilson](#) (Jane), [Georgie Henley](#) (Young Jane), and [Toby Stephens](#) (Rochester)
- 2007: *Kula Kumariya*, a Sri Lankan teledrama screened on [Swarnavahini](#), directed by [Bermin Lylie Fernando](#), starring [Ravindra Randeniya](#) (Mr. Edward Daraniyagala) and [Anarkali Akarsha](#) (Suwimali)

Theatre



Charlotte Thompson in Charlotte Birch-Pfeiffer's
stage adaptation of *Jane Eyre* (1874)

- 1849: *Jane Eyre*, a drama in five acts by [John Brougham](#)
- 1870: *Jane Eyre, or The Orphan of Lowood* by [Charlotte Birch-Pfeiffer](#)
- 1879: *Poor Relations* by James Willing.
- 1958: *Jane Eyre*, a drama in three acts and five scenes adapted by [Huntington Hartford](#) and performed at the [Belasco Theatre](#) on Broadway (1 May 1958 – 14 Jun 1958), starring [Eric Portman](#) as Mr. Rochester. In 1959 the production was nominated for a [Tony Award for Best Scenic Design](#) by Ben Edwards.
- 1994: A two-act ballet of *Jane Eyre* was created for the first time by the [London Children's Ballet](#) in 1994, with an original score by composer [Julia Gomelskaya](#) and choreography by Polyanna Buckingham.
- 1997: *Jane Eyre*, an opera in three acts, Op. 134, was composed by [John Joubert](#) in 1987–1997 to a libretto by Kenneth Birkin after the novel. The world premiere of a revised version took place at Ruddock Performing Arts Centre in [Birmingham](#) (England) on 25 October 2016, with April Fredrick (soprano) as Jane and David Stout (baritone) as Rochester. The performance was later released on CD by SOMM Recordings.
- 1998: A musical version with music by Michael Malthaner, lyrics by Charles Corritore, and book by David Matthews, was written and produced in 1998.^[58] The world premiere was in Toronto, Canada, with [Marla Schaffel](#) as Jane and [Anthony Crivello](#) as Rochester.
- 2000: *Jane Eyre*, a musical version with a book by [John Caird](#) and music and lyrics by [Paul Gordon](#), with [Marla Schaffel](#) as Jane and [James Stacy](#)

[Barbour](#) as Mr. Rochester, ran at the [Brooks Atkinson Theatre](#) from 10 December 2000 through 10 June 2001.

- 2000: [Jane Eyre](#), an opera based on the novel, was written in 2000 by English composer [Michael Berkeley](#), with a libretto by [David Malouf](#). It was given its premiere by [Music Theatre Wales](#) at the [Cheltenham Festival](#).
- 2004: Jane Eyre, an [Odd Socks Production](#), written and performed in 2004. It was shared on YouTube in 2020 to support the theatre while it was closed.
- 2006 Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, adapted by [Polly Teale](#). Company - [Shared Experience](#) performed at the Trafalgar Studios.
- 2007: The ballet *Jane*, based on the book, was created in 2007, a Bullard/Tye production with music by [Max Reger](#). Its world premiere was scheduled at the Civic Auditorium, [Kalamazoo, Michigan](#), 29 and 30 June, performed by the Kalamazoo Ballet Company, Therese Bullard, Director.
- 2008: A musical production directed by Debby Race, book by Jana Smith and Wayne R. Scott, with a musical score by Jana Smith and Brad Roseborough, premiered in 2008 at the Lifehouse Theatre in [Redlands, California](#)
- 2009: A symphony (7th) by Michel Bosc premiered in [Bandol](#) (France), 11 October 2009.
- 2013: A one-act musical farce version of *Jane Eyre* by [Gerald P. Murphy](#) was published by Lazy Bee Scripts in 2013 [Jane Eyre - A One Act, Musical Farce by Gerald P. Murphy](#)
- 2013: *The Autobiography of Jane Eyre*, an ongoing modernized web series adaptation. It was created by Nessa Aref and Alysson Hall, produced by Nessa Aref and Erika Babins, and stars Alysson Hall as Jane.
- 2014: A new stage adaptation directed by [Sally Cookson](#) was devised by the company at the [Bristol Old Vic](#) as two-parts. The production opened as a one-part play in the Lyttleton Theatre at the [National Theatre, London](#) (in a co-production with Bristol Old Vic) in 2015 before touring to Bristol Old Vic, [Nottingham Theatre Royal](#), [Hong Kong Arts Festival](#) and touring the rest of the UK in 2017, ending with another run at the National Theatre.
- 2016: A new ballet adaptation from [Northern Ballet](#) choreographed by [Cathy Marston](#) with a score by [Philip Feeney](#) premiered in the UK at the Cast Theatre in [Doncaster](#), England with Dreda Blow as Jane and Javier Torres as Rochester. In 2017 the production was nominated for the [South Bank Sky Arts Award](#) for Dance, and Northern Ballet announced the ballet will be revived in 2018 to venues including [Leeds Grand Theatre](#), [The Lowry](#), and [Sadler's Wells](#).
- 2016: [Jane Eyre](#), a 2016 opera by Louis Karchin
- 2020: Dramatic adaptation by Elizabeth Williamson. The Oregon Shakespeare Festival produced it during their 2024 season; this was its west coast premiere.

Works inspired by the Novel

Literature Sequels

- The novelist [Angela Carter](#) was working on a sequel to *Jane Eyre* at the time of her death in 1992. This was to have been the story of Jane's stepdaughter Adèle Varens and her mother Céline. Only a synopsis survives.
- 1997: *Mrs. Rochester: A Sequel to Jane Eyre* by [Hilary Bailey](#)
- 2000: *Jane Rochester* by Kimberly A. Bennett explores the first years of the Rochesters' marriage with gothic and explicit content.
- 2003: *Jane Eyre: The Graphic Novel*. Script Adaptation: Amy Corzine; Artwork: John M. Burns; Lettering: Terry Wiley; Classical Comics Ltd.
- 2008: *Jane Eyre's Daughter* by Elizabeth Newark. A fully grown daughter of Jane Eyre must choose between two men.
- 2014: *All Hallows At Eyre Hall* by Luccia Gray. Volume One of the *Eyre Hall Trilogy* is a sequel to both *Jane Eyre* and its prequel *Wide Sargasso Sea*. Twenty-two years have passed since Jane became Mrs. Rochester, and Richard Mason has returned from Jamaica, revealing more of Edward Rochester's unspeakable secrets.
- 2017: *Jane Eyre at Cranbridge* by Emma Foxwood is a sequel to *Jane Eyre*. Shortly after Jane returns to Edward Rochester and marries him, a turn of events causes Jane to travel to the quiet village of Cranbridge. While there, she experiences a series of remarkable events.

Re-workings

- 1958: *Nine Coaches Waiting* by [Mary Stewart](#) makes implicit and explicit reference to *Jane Eyre*. The novel is a gothic romance set in a remote French château in the 1950s. The heroine, Linda, is, like Jane, an orphan who takes on the role of governess, this time to a young boy. She compares her situation to that of Jane Eyre on several occasions. Motifs from *Jane Eyre* also appear in Stewart's *The Ivy Tree* (1961) but without explicit references to the novel.
- 1993: [Thai novel](#) *Ruk Diow Kong Jenjira* adapted by Nida.
- 2002: *Jenna Starborn* by [Sharon Shinn](#), a science-fiction novel based upon *Jane Eyre*
- 2010: *Jane Slayre* by [Sherri Browning Erwin](#). In the same vein as *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*, this has Jane Eyre battling vampires while also working through the events of the original story.
- 2010 *Sloane Hall* by Libby Sternberg, a retelling set in 1929 Hollywood as films shifted from silent to sound. [ISBN 9781594149177](#)
- 2010: *Jane* by April Lindner. Set in the 20th century with Mr. Rochester as Nico Rathburn, a world-famous rockstar
- 2010: *Chocolate Roses* by Joan Sowards. A modern [LDS](#) novel parodying *Jane Eyre*. [ISBN 9781935217626](#)

- 2012: *The Flight of Gemma Hardy* by Margot Livesey is a modern variation on *Jane Eyre* set in 1960s Scotland.
- 2012: *Jane Eyre Laid Bare*, which is credited to Eve Sinclair and Charlotte Brontë. An erotic [mashup](#) work.
- 2012: *Jane Eyrotica* by Charlotte Brontë and Karena Rose. An erotic [mashup](#) work.
- 2015: *Re Jane: A Novel* by Patricia Park pictures Jane as a half-Korean, half-American orphan in Flushing, Queens.
- 2015: "Unearthly Things" by George Mann; a [comic book](#) story published by [Titan Comics](#) and based upon the science fiction TV series *Doctor Who*, in which the [Twelfth Doctor](#) and [Clara Oswald](#) share an adventure with Brontë, and their relationship inspires the author to base the characters of Jane and Rochester on them.
- 2016: *Jane Steele* by [Lyndsay Faye](#); inspired by her reading of *Jane Eyre*, the titular protagonist tells her story, which follows a similar path to the original, but this Jane is a serial killer.
- 2016: A [manga](#) adaptation by Crystal S. Chan was published by Manga Classics Inc., with artwork by Sunneko Lee.
- 2017: *Jane* by [Aline Brosh McKenna](#) and [Ramon K. Perez](#); a [graphic novel](#) published by [Boom! Studios](#), it is a contemporary reworking of the novel set in modern-day New York, with Jane being a nanny for a Westchester recluse and St. John being reimagined as her crossdressing fashion designer roommate Hector.
- 2018: *My Plain Jane* by Cynthia Hand, Brodi Ashton, and Jodie Meadows. A [young adult historical fantasy](#) novel in which Jane is recruited by a ghost-hunting agency.
- 2018: *Brightly Burning* by [Alexa Donne](#). A [young adult](#) romantic mystery set in space.

Re-tellings

- 2006: *The Translator* by [Leila Aboulela](#), a Sudanese British Muslim retelling.
- 2007: *Thornfield Hall: Jane Eyre's Hidden Story* by [Emma Tennant](#).
- 2010: *I am Jane Eyre* by Teana Rowland. This version of *Jane Eyre* delves into some of the unexplained aspects of the novel.
- 2015: *Jane Eyre: My Private Autobiography* by W.J. Harrison. This version of *Jane Eyre* works in some novel twists that fit into the original plot, such as Jane's pursuit of Rochester and St. John's homosexuality.
- 2021: *The Wife Upstairs* by [Rachel Hawkins](#).
- 2023: *Jane & Edward* by Melodie Edwards. Retelling of *Jane Eyre* in modern times.

Prequels

- 1966: *Wide Sargasso Sea* by [Jean Rhys](#). The character Bertha Mason serves as the main protagonist for this novel which acts as a prequel to *Jane Eyre*. It describes the meeting and marriage of Antoinette Cosway (later renamed Bertha by Mr. Rochester) and Mr. Rochester. In its reshaping of

events related to *Jane Eyre*, the novel suggests that Bertha's madness is not congenital, but rather the result of terrible childhood experiences and Mr. Rochester's unloving treatment of her. *Wide Sargasso Sea* has been [adapted into film](#) twice.

Spin-offs

2001: The novel *The Eyre Affair* by [Jasper Fforde](#) revolves around the plot of *Jane Eyre*. It portrays the book as originally largely free of literary contrivance: Jane and Mr. Rochester's first meeting is a simple conversation without the dramatic horse accident, and Jane does not hear his voice calling for her and ends up starting a new life in India. The protagonist's efforts mostly accidentally change it to the real version.

- 2009: *Becoming Jane Eyre* by [Sheila Kohler](#). A novel about Charlotte Brontë writing the story.
- 2009: *Jane Airhead* by Kay Woodward. A novel about a present-day teenage girl obsessed with Jane Eyre.
- 2012: *A Breath of Eyre* by Eve Marie Mont. The first novel in a series about a girl named Emma who is transported into the stories of her favorite books. In this instalment, Emma finds herself in the role of Jane Eyre, the book she is currently reading. Once there, she must choose whether to follow the plot of Jane's story or return to her own.

Re-tellings from another character's point of view

- 1966: *Wide Sargasso Sea* by [Jean Rhys](#). Bertha's story beginning with her origins in the Caribbean, where she was forced to marry Rochester, and ending with her entrapment and suicide in Rochester's English home.
- 2000: *Adèle: Jane Eyre's Hidden Story* by [Emma Tennant](#)
- 2006: *The French Dancer's Bastard: The Story of Adèle From Jane Eyre* by Emma Tennant. This is a slightly modified version of Tennant's 2000 novel.
- 2009: *Adele, Grace, and Celine: The Other Women of Jane Eyre* by Claire Moise. This both retells the story from the point of view of three other women and explains their fate after the main events of the story.
- 2010: *Rochester: A Novel Inspired by Jane Eyre* by J.L. Niemann. *Jane Eyre* told from the first-person perspective of Edward Rochester.
- 2011: *Jane Eyre's Rival: The Real Mrs Rochester* by Clair Holland. Told from the perspective of Bertha Antoinetta Mason, Mr. Rochester's first wife, by Lisa Mason, Antoinetta's modern-day descendant.
- 2011: *Jane Eyre's Husband – The Life of Edward Rochester* by Tara Bradley. Rochester's entire life.
- 2017: *Mr Rochester* by Sarah Shoemaker – Edward Fairfax Rochester's life before he meets Jane, then essentially, Jane Eyre from his perspective.
- 2022: *Reluctant Immortals* by Gwendolyn Kiste. Reimagines Rochester as an immortal villain and Bertha as a victim who becomes immortal.

- 2022: *Reader, I Murdered Him* by Betsy Cornwell. Tells Adele's story starting from before Rochester takes her to England through the novel and focuses on her time after Jane Eyre at school in London.

Other influences

- 1938: *Rebecca* by [Daphne du Maurier](#) has parallels with *Jane Eyre*. However, the author never confirmed any direct influence of *Jane Eyre* on her novel.

Music

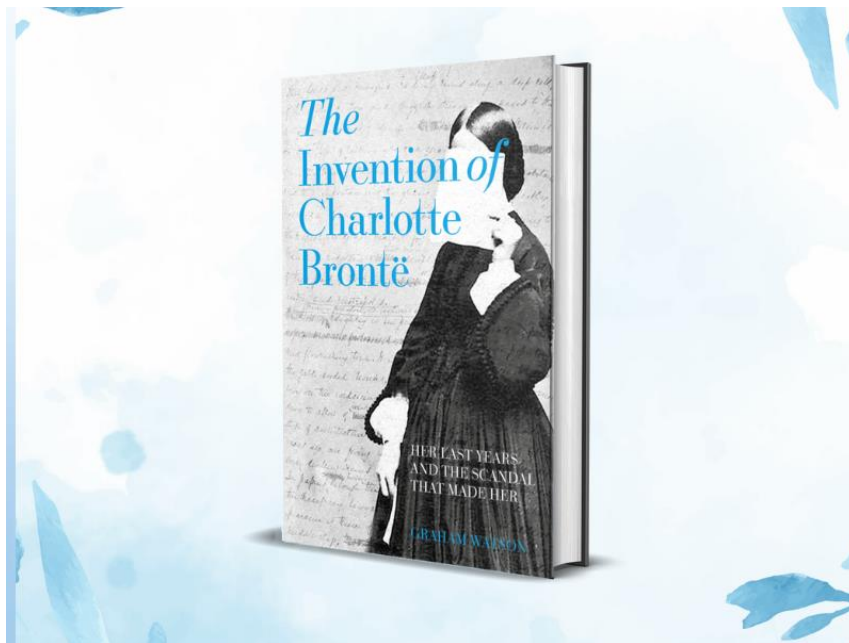
- 2019: *Madwoman in the Attic*, a song by [Blackbriar](#) and featured on their album *Our Mortal Remains*, is inspired by the novel.



The legacy of Charlotte Brontë

{Ref: <https://thehistorypress.co.uk/article/the-legacy-of-charlotte-bronte/>}

By Graham Watson



21st April marks the anniversary of the birth of English novelist and poet Charlotte Brontë. While she lived only 38 years, her legacy - and her celebrity - have remained perennially present. Her 1847 novel *Jane Eyre* is one of the most enduring texts of the 19th century, a novel whose capability to capture and influence new generations of readers and writers extends from stream-of-conscious experiments of the early 20th century Modernists through inescapable bestsellers of the 21st century like *Fifty Shades of Grey*, and into impassioned 6 second videos by TikTok's young book influencers.

The basics of her life are often repeated. She was the third of six children born to an Irish vicar and his Cornish wife in Thornton, Yorkshire and moved shortly before her 4th birthday when her father was relocated to nearby Haworth. There she spent the rest of her life. Along with the brother and two sisters who survived childhood – Branwell, Emily and Anne – she began writing as a child. In their 20s the sisters published a joint collection of poetry, followed a year later by the novels that made them notorious in their day: Charlotte's *Jane Eyre*, Emily's *Wuthering Heights* and Anne's *Agnes Grey*. Within 18 months Branwell, Emily and Anne were all dead, just as Charlotte was becoming celebrated as one of Britain's literary superstars. She produced two more novels – *Shirley* and *Villette* – before she too died in 1855, nine months after her marriage.

Journalists at the time saw her early death as sad but not unusual. Some thought it the inevitably tragic end to a tragic life. Yet her closest friends, who felt Charlotte had been exploited, excluded, mistreated and abused all her life, began to demand justice. The one chosen to serve it was the bestselling novelist Elizabeth Gaskell, who had known Brontë during her last five years. Determined to deliver not only justice, but a form of revenge for the hardships she felt Brontë unnecessarily endured, Gaskell slandered all those who had mistreated her in a biography so controversial it was banned shortly after publication in response to legal threats and had to be rewritten and reissued twice in 6 months. Out of the media scandal Gaskell detonated came the unstoppable myth of the Brontë siblings as doomed geniuses in romantic solitude. But the question of how much of it was true has dogged historians ever since.

My book, *The Invention of Charlotte Brontë*, reassesses the evidence. Using first-hand accounts, it reconstructs how Gaskell's friendship with Brontë informed her biography more comprehensively than has been previously thought, how she diligently tracked down to interview everyone who had known Brontë and ultimately, driven to the point of obsession, battled those who wished to control how history would remember Brontë and tried to block her from telling her story. The result, her *Life of Charlotte Brontë*, was a sensation, scandalising readers and outraging those Gaskell had called out.

While it transformed Brontë into one of British history's most iconic figures, it almost destroyed Gaskell's sanity. The scandal earned her a lasting reputation as an unreliable opportunist. But, as my book demonstrates, nothing could be further from the truth.





1818



1848



I will walk where my own nature
would be leading.

~ Emily Brontë

AZ QUOTES



Wuthering Heights

Full Book Summary

{<https://www.sparknotes.com/lit/wuthering/summary/>}

In the late winter months of 1801, a man named [Lockwood](#) rents a manor house called Thrushcross Grange in the isolated moor country of England. Here, he meets his dour landlord, [Heathcliff](#), a wealthy man who lives in the ancient manor of Wuthering Heights, four miles away from the Grange. In this wild, stormy countryside, Lockwood asks his housekeeper, [Nelly Dean](#), to tell him the story of Heathcliff and the strange denizens of Wuthering Heights. Nelly consents, and Lockwood writes down his recollections of her tale in his diary; these written recollections form the main part of ***Wuthering Heights***.

Nelly remembers her childhood. As a young girl, she works as a servant at Wuthering Heights for the owner of the manor, Mr. Earnshaw, and his family. One day, Mr. Earnshaw goes to Liverpool and returns home with an orphan boy whom he will raise with his own children. At first, the Earnshaw children—a boy named Hindley and his younger sister [Catherine](#)—detest the dark-skinned Heathcliff. But Catherine quickly comes to love him, and the two soon grow inseparable, spending their days playing on the moors. After his wife's death, Mr. Earnshaw grows to prefer Heathcliff to his own son, and when Hindley continues his cruelty to Heathcliff, Mr. Earnshaw sends Hindley away to college, keeping Heathcliff nearby.

Three years later, Mr. Earnshaw dies, and Hindley inherits Wuthering Heights. He returns with a wife, Frances, and immediately seeks revenge on Heathcliff. Once an orphan, later a pampered and favored son, Heathcliff now finds himself treated as a common laborer, forced to work in the fields. Heathcliff continues his close relationship with Catherine, however. One

night they wander to Thrushcross Grange, hoping to tease [Edgar](#) and [Isabella Linton](#), the cowardly, snobbish children who live there. Catherine is bitten by a dog and is forced to stay at the Grange to recuperate for five weeks, during which time Mrs. Linton works to make her a proper young lady. By the time Catherine returns, she has become infatuated with Edgar, and her relationship with Heathcliff grows more complicated.

When Frances dies after giving birth to a baby boy named Hareton, Hindley descends into the depths of alcoholism, and behaves even more cruelly and abusively toward Heathcliff. Eventually, Catherine's desire for social advancement prompts her to become engaged to Edgar Linton, despite her overpowering love for Heathcliff. Heathcliff runs away from Wuthering Heights, staying away for three years, and returning shortly after Catherine and Edgar's marriage.

When Heathcliff returns, he immediately sets about seeking revenge on all who have wronged him. Having come into a vast and mysterious wealth, he deviously lends money to the drunken Hindley, knowing that Hindley will increase his debts and fall into deeper despondency. When Hindley dies, Heathcliff inherits the manor. He also places himself in line to inherit Thrushcross Grange by marrying Isabella Linton, whom he treats very cruelly. Catherine becomes ill, gives birth to a daughter, and dies. Heathcliff begs her spirit to remain on Earth—she may take whatever form she will, she may haunt him, drive him mad—just as long as she does not leave him alone. Shortly thereafter, Isabella flees to London and gives birth to Heathcliff's son, named Linton after her family. She keeps the boy with her there.

Thirteen years pass, during which Nelly Dean serves as Catherine's daughter's nursemaid at Thrushcross Grange. Young Cathy is beautiful and headstrong like her mother, but her temperament is modified by her

father's gentler influence. Cathy grows up at the Grange with no knowledge of Wuthering Heights; one day, however, wandering through the moors, she discovers the manor, meets Hareton, and plays together with him. Soon afterwards, Isabella dies, and Linton comes to live with Heathcliff. Heathcliff treats his sickly, whining son even more cruelly than he treated the boy's mother.

Three years later, Cathy meets Heathcliff on the moors, and makes a visit to Wuthering Heights to meet Linton. She and Linton begin a secret romance conducted entirely through letters. When Nelly destroys Cathy's collection of letters, the girl begins sneaking out at night to spend time with her frail young lover, who asks her to come back and nurse him back to health. However, it quickly becomes apparent that Linton is pursuing Cathy only because Heathcliff is forcing him to; Heathcliff hopes that if Cathy marries Linton, his legal claim upon Thrushcross Grange—and his revenge upon Edgar Linton—will be complete.

One day, as Edgar Linton grows ill and nears death, Heathcliff lures Nelly and Cathy back to Wuthering Heights, and holds them prisoner until Cathy marries Linton. Soon after the marriage, Edgar dies, and his death is quickly followed by the death of the sickly Linton. Heathcliff now controls both Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange. He forces Cathy to live at Wuthering Heights and act as a common servant, while he rents Thrushcross Grange to Lockwood.

Nelly's story ends as she reaches the present. Lockwood, appalled, ends his tenancy at Thrushcross Grange and returns to London. However, six months later, he pays a visit to Nelly, and learns of further developments in the story. Although Cathy originally mocked Hareton's ignorance and illiteracy (in an act of retribution, Heathcliff ended Hareton's education after Hindley died), Cathy grows to love Hareton as they live together at Wuthering Heights. Heathcliff becomes more and more obsessed with the

memory of the elder Catherine, to the extent that he begins speaking to her ghost. Everything he sees reminds him of her. Shortly after a night spent walking on the moors, Heathcliff dies. Hareton and Cathy inherit Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange, and they plan to be married on the next New Year's Day. After hearing the end of the story, Lockwood goes to visit the graves of Catherine and Heathcliff.

Chronology

The story of ***Wuthering Heights*** is told through flashbacks recorded in diary entries, and events are often presented out of chronological order—Lockwood's narrative takes place after Nelly's narrative, for instance, but is interspersed with Nelly's story in his journal. Nevertheless, the novel contains enough clues to enable an approximate reconstruction of its chronology, which was elaborately designed by Emily Brontë. For instance, Lockwood's diary entries are recorded in the late months of 1801 and in September 1802; in 1801, Nelly tells Lockwood that she has lived at Thrushcross Grange for eighteen years, since Catherine's marriage to Edgar, which must then have occurred in 1783.

We know that Catherine was engaged to Edgar for three years, and that Nelly was twenty-two when they were engaged, so the engagement must have taken place in 1780, and Nelly must have been born in 1758. Since Nelly is a few years older than Catherine, and since Lockwood comments that Heathcliff is about forty years old in 1801, it stands to reason that Heathcliff and Catherine were born around 1761, three years after Nelly. There are several other clues like this in the novel (such as Hareton's birth, which occurs in June, 1778). The following chronology is based on those clues, and should closely approximate the timing of the novel's important events. A "~" before a date indicates that it cannot be precisely determined from the evidence in the novel, but only closely estimated.

1500: The stone above the front door of Wuthering Heights, bearing the name of Hareton Earnshaw, is inscribed, possibly to mark the completion of the house.

1758: Nelly is born.

~**1761:** Heathcliff and Catherine are born.

~**1767:** Mr. Earnshaw brings Heathcliff to live at Wuthering Heights.

1774: Mr. Earnshaw sends Hindley away to college.

1777: Mr. Earnshaw dies; Hindley and Frances take possession of Wuthering Heights; Catherine first visits Thrushcross Grange around Christmastime.

1778: Hareton is born in June; Frances dies; Hindley begins his slide into alcoholism.

1780: Catherine becomes engaged to Edgar Linton; Heathcliff leaves Wuthering Heights.

1783: Catherine and Edgar are married; Heathcliff arrives at Thrushcross Grange in September.

1784: Heathcliff and Isabella elope in the early part of the year; Catherine becomes ill with brain fever; her daughter Cathy is born late in the year; Catherine dies.

1785: Early in the year, Isabella flees Wuthering Heights and settles in London; Linton is born.

~**1785:** Hindley dies; Heathcliff inherits Wuthering Heights.

~**1797:** Young Cathy meets Hareton and visits Wuthering Heights for the first time; Linton comes from London after Isabella dies (in late 1797 or early 1798).

1800: Cathy stages her romance with Linton in the winter.

1801: Early in the year, Cathy is imprisoned by Heathcliff and forced to marry Linton; Edgar Linton dies; Linton dies; Heathcliff assumes control of Thrushcross Grange. Late in the year, Lockwood rents the Grange from Heathcliff and begins his tenancy. In a winter storm, Lockwood takes ill and begins conversing with Nelly Dean.

1801-1802: During the winter, Nelly narrates her story for Lockwood.

1802: In spring, Lockwood returns to London; Cathy and Hareton fall in love; Heathcliff dies; Lockwood returns in September and hears the end of the story from Nelly.

1803: On New Year's Day, Cathy and Hareton plan to be married.

@@@@@@@@@@@@



The climb to ruined farmhouse Top Withens, thought to have inspired the Earnshaws' home in *Wuthering Heights*



Laurence Olivier and Merle Oberon in the 1939 film *Wuthering Heights*

Kindly visit the Web Pages to read or download the book "*Wuthering Heights*"

(a) <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/768>

(b) <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/768/768-h/768-h.htm>

Additional Information

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wuthering_Heights

**WUTHERING HEIGHTS | Drama Romance |
[Video] Emily Bronte | Free Movie [2:32:59]**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=age-U5mhuUY>

Some Movies

01] **Wuthering Heights by Emily Brontë | Full Audiobook**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yzz2h_sLJVg [12:03:40]

Wuthering Heights is a haunting story of passion, vengeance, and love that defies time and convention. Set amid the windswept moors of northern England, the tragic tale of Catherine and Heathcliff unfolds—a bond so intense it borders on the supernatural. Though their souls are inseparable, fate tears them apart, leaving a trail of obsession and madness. Can love be as destructive as it is powerful? The answer waits within the walls of Wuthering Heights

02] **Wuthering Heights (1958) | Full Movie**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lo_X2athjwc [1:16:22]

Follow the self-destructive journey of Heathcliff as he seeks revenge for losing his soul mate, Catherine, to Edgar Linton

03] **Wuthering Heights (1939)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dqz6y5peHoM> [1:39:36]

04] **Wuthering Heights 2023**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=olLP3fWt6Mg> [2:41:19]

05] **Wuthering Heights 2009**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RgSsKgiIwiE> [2:17:44]

06] **Wuthering Heights (2011) by Emily Bronte, starring Carol Prekopp and Natalie Press**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bY-iHHcvrzE> [1:28:28]

Quotes from

Emily Brontë

"I wish I were a girl again, half savage and hardy, and free"

"If he loved with all the powers of his puny being, he couldn't love as much in eighty years as I could in a day."

"He's always, always in my mind - not as a pleasure, any more than I am always a pleasure to myself - but, as my own being."

"Honest people don't hide their deeds."

"If all else perished, and he remained, I should still continue to be; and if all else remained, and he were annihilated, the universe would turn to a mighty stranger."

"It was not the thorn bending to the honeysuckles, but the honeysuckles embracing the thorn."

"Treachery and violence are spears pointed at both ends; they wound those who resort to them worse than their enemies."

"He's more myself than I am. Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same."

"I have to remind myself to breathe -- almost to remind my heart to beat!"

"I am now quite cured of seeking pleasure in society, be it country or town. A sensible man ought to find sufficient company in himself."

"I wish I were out of doors! I wish I were a girl again, half savage and hardy, and free . . . and laughing at injuries, not maddening under them!"

"You said I killed you—haunt me then!"

"Is Mr. Heathcliff a man? If so, is he mad? If not, is he a devil?"

"It was not the thorn bending to the honeysuckles, but the honeysuckles embracing the thorn."

"He might as well plant an oak in a flower-pot and expect it to thrive, as imagine he can restore her to vigor in the soil of his shallow cares!"

"My love for Linton is like the foliage in the woods: time will change it, I'm well aware, as winter changes the trees. My love for Heathcliff resembles the eternal rocks beneath: a source of little visible delight, but necessary. Nelly, I am Heathcliff."

"I'll try to break their hearts by breaking my own."

"I want you to be aware that I know you have treated me infernally—infernally! . . . and if you think I can be consoled by sweet words, you are an idiot: and if you fancy I'll suffer unrevenged, I'll convince you of the contrary, in a very little while! Meantime, thank you for telling me your sister-in-law's secret: I swear I'll make the most of it."

"I get levers and mattocks to demolish the two houses, and train myself to be capable of working like Hercules, and when everything is ready and in my power, I find the will to lift a slate off either roof has vanished! My old enemies have not beaten me; now would be the precise time to revenge myself...But where is the use? I don't care for striking...I have lost the faculty of enjoying their destruction, and I am too idle to destroy for nothing."

"Love is like the wild rose-briar; Friendship like the holly-tree. The holly is dark when the rose-briar blooms, but which will bloom most constantly?"

"The old church tower and garden wall
Are black with autumn rain
And dreary winds foreboding call
The darkness down again"

"What have those lonely mountains worth revealing?
More glory and more grief than I can tell:"

"Oh! dreadful is the check—intense the agony—
When the ear begins to hear, and the eye begins to see;
When the pulse begins to throb, the brain to think again;
The soul to feel the flesh, and the flesh to feel the chain."

"Oh, for the time when I shall sleep without identity.
and never care how rain may steep,
or snow may cover me —"

"Oh, stars, and dreams, and gentle night;
Oh, night and stars, return!
And hide me from the hostile light
That does not warm, but burn
- Stars"

"So, if a tear, when thou art dying, Should haply fall from me,
It is but that my soul is sighing, To go and rest with thee."

"But, when the days of golden dreams had perished, And even
Despair was powerless to destroy; Then did I learn how
existence could be cherished, Strengthened, and fed without
the aid of joy."

"There cast my anchor of desire Deep in unknown eternity; Nor
ever let my spirit tire, With looking for what is to be!"

"Why dost thou hold the treasure fast, Of youth's delight, when
youth is past, And thou art near thy prime?"

"How spring can bring thee glory, yet, And summer win thee to
forget"

"'He's not a human being,' she retorted; 'and he has no claim
on my charity. I gave him my heart, and he took and pinched it
to death, and flung it back to me. People feel with their hearts,
Ellen: and since he has destroyed mine, I have not power to
feel for him.'"

"You teach me now how cruel you've been—cruel and false.
Why did you despise me? Why did you betray your own heart,
Cathy? I have not one word of comfort."

"You loved me—then what right had you to leave me?"

"You shouldn't lie till ten. There's the very prime of the morning gone long before that time. A person who has not done one-half his day's work by ten o'clock, runs a chance of leaving the other half undone."

"I'm tired of being enclosed here. I'm wearying to escape into that glorious world, and to be always there: not seeing it dimly through tears, and yearning for it through the walls of an aching heart: but really with it, and in it."

"Are you possessed with a devil," he pursued, savagely, "to talk in that manner to me when you are dying? Do you reflect that all those words will be branded in my memory, and eating deeper eternally after you have left me?"

"Time brought resignation, and a melancholy sweeter than common joy."

"Only Jane Austen did it and Emily Brontë. It is another feather, perhaps the finest, in their caps. They wrote as women write, not as men write. Of all the thousand women who wrote novels then, they alone entirely ignored the perpetual admonitions of the eternal pedagogue—write this, think that."

"It is strange," I began, in the interval of swallowing one cup of tea and receiving another—"it is strange how custom can mould our tastes and ideas: many could not imagine the existence of happiness in a life of such complete exile from the world as you spend, Mr. Heathcliff; yet, I'll venture to say, that, surrounded by your family, and with your amiable lady as the presiding genius over your home and heart—"

"Then I hope his ghost will haunt you; and I hope Mr. Heathcliff will never get another tenant till the Grange is a ruin," she answered, sharply.

"A man's life is of more consequence than one evening's neglect of the horses: somebody must go,"

"He must have had some ups and downs in life to make him such a churl. Do you know anything of his history?"

"And I pray that he may break your neck: take him, and be damned, you beggarly interloper! and wheedle my father out of all he has: only afterwards show him what you are, imp of Satan.—And take that, I hope he'll kick out your brains!"

"Poor Heathcliff! Hindley calls him a vagabond, and won't let him sit with us, nor eat with us any more; and, he says, he and I must not play together, and threatens to turn him out of the house if we break his orders."

"A wild, wicked slip she was— but she had the bonniest eye, the sweetest smile, and lightest foot in the parish: and, after all, I believe she meant no harm; for when once she made you cry in good earnest, it seldom happened that she would not keep you company, and oblige you to be quiet that you might comfort her."

"...for when Heathcliff expressed contempt of Linton in his presence, she could not half coincide, as she did in his absence; and when Linton evinced disgust and antipathy to Heathcliff, She dared not treat his sentiments with indifference, as if depreciation of her playmate were of scarcely any consequence to her."

"Nothing—only look at the almanack on that wall;" he pointed to a framed sheet hanging near the window, and continued, "The crosses are for the evenings you have spent with the Lintons, the dots for those spent with me. Do you see? I've marked every day."

"Nelly, will you keep a secret for me?" she pursued, kneeling down by me, and lifting her winsome eyes to my face with that sort of look which turns off bad temper, even when one has all the right in the world to indulge it.

"Yes, and it worries me, and I must let it out! I want to know what I should do. To-day, Edgar Linton has asked me to marry him, and I've given him an answer. Now, before I tell you whether it was a consent or denial, you tell me which it ought to have been."

Read *Wuthering Heights*

Wuthering Heights is the only novel by the English author [Emily Brontë](#), initially published in 1847 under her [pen name](#) "Ellis Bell". It concerns two families of the [landed gentry](#) living on the [West Yorkshire moors](#), the Earnshaws and the Lintons, and their turbulent relationships with the Earnshaws' foster son, [Heathcliff](#). The novel, influenced by [Romanticism](#) and [Gothic fiction](#), is considered a classic of [English literature](#).



Wuthering Heights was accepted by publisher Thomas Newby along with [Anne Brontë's](#) *Agnes Grey* before the success of their sister [Charlotte Brontë's](#) novel *Jane Eyre*, but they were published later. The first American edition was published in April 1848 by [Harper & Brothers](#) of New York. After Emily's death, Charlotte edited a second edition of *Wuthering Heights*, which was published in 1850.

Wuthering Heights is now widely considered to be one of the greatest novels ever written in English, but contemporaneous reviews were polarised. It was controversial for its depictions of mental and physical cruelty, including [domestic abuse](#), and for its challenges to [Victorian morality](#), religion, and the [class system](#). It has inspired an array of [adaptations](#) across several media, including English singer-songwriter [Kate Bush's](#) [song of the same name](#).

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https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wuthering_Heights

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Wuthering Heights

Overview

Wuthering Heights by [Emily Brontë](#), published in 1847, stands as a timeless classic set against the haunting backdrop of the Yorkshire moors. The narrative unfolds through the eyes of Mr. Lockwood, who becomes entangled in the tragic history of the Earnshaw and Linton families. At the heart of the novel is the intense and destructive love between Heathcliff and Catherine Earnshaw, whose passionate connection weaves a dark and tumultuous tale of revenge, obsession, and the brutal forces of nature.

The novel's setting, the desolate moors, mirrors the wild and uncontrollable emotions of its characters, creating an atmospheric and Gothic backdrop for the drama. Emily Brontë's deep-dive into the darker aspects of human nature and the complexities of love deviates from the societal norms of her time, making *Wuthering Heights* a groundbreaking work in 19th-century literature.

Adaptations of *Wuthering Heights* have sought to capture the novel's haunting essence. The 1939 film directed by William Wyler remains a notable interpretation, preserving the atmospheric quality of the moors and the intense emotions that define Brontë's masterpiece. The enduring appeal of *Wuthering Heights* lies in its profound exploration of the human psyche, its passionate characters, and the atmospheric setting that continues to captivate readers and audiences alike.

Read the free [full text](#), the [full plot summary](#), an in-depth character analysis of [Heathcliff](#), and explanations of [important quotes](#) from *Wuthering Heights*.

<https://www.sparknotes.com/lit/wuthering/>



Wuthering Heights

A Cult Classic

<https://theconversation.com/why-emily-brontes-wuthering-heights-is-a-cult-classic-100748>

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Nothing about the reception of Emily Brontë's first and only published novel, Wuthering Heights, in 1847 suggested that it would grow to achieve its now-cult status. While contemporary critics often admitted its power, even unwillingly responding to the clarity of its psychological realism, the overwhelming response was one of disgust at its brutish and brooding Byronic hero, Heathcliff, and his beloved Catherine, whose rebellion against the norms of Victorian femininity neutered her of any claim to womanly attraction.

The characters speak in tongues heavily inflected with expletives, hurling words like weapons of affliction, and indulging throughout in a gleeful schadenfreude as they attempt to exact revenge on each other. It is all rather like a relentless chess game in hell. One of its early reviewers wrote that the novel "strongly shows the brutalising influence of unchecked passion".

Moral philosopher Martha Nussbaum claims, however, that "we must ourselves confront the shocking in *Wuthering Heights*, or we will have no chance of understanding what Emily Brontë is setting out to do". The reader must give herself over to the horror of Brontë's inverted world.

She must jump, as it were, without looking to see if there is water below. It is a *Paradise Lost* of a novel: its poetry Miltonic, its style hyperbolic, and its cruelty relentless. It has left readers and scholars alike stumbling to locate its seemingly Delphic meaning, as we try to make sense of the Hobbesian world it portrays.

The author remains as elusive as her enigmatic masterpiece. As new critical appraisals emerge in this, Emily Brontë's bicentenary year, the scant traces she left of her personal life beyond her poetry and several extant diary papers, are re-fashioned accordingly.

Described as the "sphinx of the moors", her obstinate mystery has lured countless pilgrims to the Haworth home in which she passed almost all of her life, and the surrounding moorlands that were the landscape of her daily



Sir Laurence Olivier (Heathcliff) and Merle Oberon (Cathy) from the 1939 film adaptation.

walks and the inspiration for her writing. Brontë relinquished her jealous hold of the manuscript only after considerable pressure from her sister Charlotte, who insisted that it be published.

Wuthering Heights was released pseudonymously under the name Ellis Bell, published in an edition that included her sister Anne's lesser known work, Agnes Grey. Emily was to die just 12 months later, in December 1848.

As Brontë biographer Juliet Barker writes, the writer stubbornly maintained the pretence of health even in the final stages of consumption, insisting on getting out of bed to take care of her much loved dog, Keeper. She resisted death with remarkable self-discipline but, "her unbending spirit finally broken", she acquiesced to a doctor's attendance. It was by then too late; she was just 30.

After her sister's death, Charlotte Brontë wrote two biographical prefaces to accompany a new edition of Wuthering Heights, instantiating the mythology both of her sister – "stronger than a man, simpler than a child" – and her infamous novel: "It is rustic all through. It is moorish, and wild, and knotty as the root of heath."

A feminist icon

It is that property of wildness that has compelled artists from Sylvia Plath to Kate Bush, whose 1978 hit single, Wuthering Heights, was representative of the magnetic pull of Brontë's fierce heroine, Catherine.

The novel has maintained its relevance in popular culture, and its author has risen to a feminist icon.

The elusiveness of the woman and the book that now seems an extension of her subjectivity, gives both a malleability that has seen *Wuthering Heights* transformed into various mediums: several Hollywood films, theatre, a ballet and, perhaps most incongruously, a detective novel. Brontë's name is used to sell everything from food to dry-cleaning products.

Film versions have tended to indulge in a surfeit of romanticism, offering up visions of the lovers swooning atop windswept hills, most famously in the 1939 movie, with Laurence Olivier as a dashing Heathcliff, a heavily sanitised re-telling of what the promotional material billed as "the greatest love story of our time - or any time!" Andrea Arnold's gritty, pared-back [2011 film](#) is the notable exception; bleak and darkly violent, the actors speak in an at times unintelligible dialect, scrambling across a blasted wilderness as though they are animals.

Contrary to Charlotte Brontë's revisioning, however, *Wuthering Heights* was not purely the product of a terrible divine inspiration, emerging partially formed from the granite rock of the Yorkshire landscape, to be hewn from Emily's simple materials.

Instead, it is the work of a writer looking back to past Romantic forms, specifically the German incarnation of that aesthetic, infused with folkloric taboos and primal longings. Her tale of domestic gothic is housed in an intricately complex narrative architecture that works by repetition and doubling, at the fulcrum of which stands Catherine, the supremely defiant object of Heathcliff's obsession.

At the novel's core is the corrosiveness of love, with the titanic power of Shakespearean tragedy and the dialogic form of a Greek morality play. Two families, locked in internecine war and bound together by patrilineal inheritance, stage their abject conflict across the small geographical space that separates their respective households: the luxury and insipidity of the Grange, versus the shabby gentility, decay, and violence of the Heights.

A claustrophobic novel

It is a distinctly claustrophobic novel: although we read with a vague sense of the vastness of the moors that is its setting, the action unfolds, with few exceptions, in domestic interiors. Despite countless readings, I can conjure no distinct image of the Grange. But the outline of the Heights, with each room unfolding into yet another set of rooms, labyrinthine and imprisoning, has settled into my mind. The deeper you enter into the space of the Heights - the space of the text - the more bewildering the effect.

The love between Heathcliff and Catherine exists now as a myth operative outside any substantial relationship to the novel from which the lovers spring. It is shorthand in popular culture for doomed passion. Much of this hyper-romance gathers around Catherine's declaration of Platonic unity with her would-be lover: "I am Heathcliff – he's always, always in my mind." Yet their relationship is never less than brutal.

What is it about their unearthly union, with its overtones of necrophilia and incestuous desire, that so captivates us, and why does Emily Brontë privilege this form of explicitly masochistic, irrevocable and unattainable love?

Brontë's great theme was transcendence, and I would suggest that it is the metaphysical affinity that solders these two lovers that so beguiles us. The greediness of their feeling for each other resembles nothing in reality. It is hyperreal, as Catherine and Heathcliff do not aspire so much as to be together, as to be each other. Twinned in that shared commitment and to the natural world that was the hunting-ground of their childhood play, they try, with increasing desperation, to get at each other's souls.

This is not a physically erotic coupling: the body is immaterial to their love. It is a very different notion of desire to that of Jane Eyre and Rochester, for instance, in Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre, which is very fleshy indeed. Both Catherine and Heathcliff want to get under each other's skin, quite literally, to join and become that singular body of their childhood fantasies. It is a dream, then, of total union, of an impossible return to origins. It is not heavenly in its transcendence, but decidedly earthly. "I cannot express it", Catherine tells her nurse Nelly Dean, who is our homely, yet not so benign, narrator:

But surely you and everybody have a notion that there is, or should be, an existence of yours beyond you. What were the use of my creation if I were entirely contained here? My great miseries in this world have been Heathcliff's miseries ... my great thought in living is himself. I all else perished, and he remained, I should still continue to be.

This notion of the self eclipsing its selfish form seems impossible for us to conceive in an age where one's individuality is sacred. It is, however, the essence of Catherine's tragedy: her search for her self's home among the men who circle her is futile. Nevertheless, Emily Brontë's radical statement of a shared ontology grounds the eroticism between the pair so that we cannot look away; and neither it seems, can the other characters in the novel.

The book's structure is famously complex, with multiple narrators and a fluid style that results in one focalising voice shading into another. The story

proper begins with Lockwood, a stranger to the rugged moorlands, a gentleman accustomed to urban life and its polite civilisations.

The terrifying nightmare he endures on his first night under Heathcliff's roof, and the gruesomely violent outcome of his fear sets in motion the central love story that pulls all else irresistibly to it. Heathcliff's thrice-repeated invocation of Catherine's name, which Lockwood finds written in the margins of a book and mistakenly believes to be "nothing but a name", works as an incantation, summoning the ghost of the woman who haunts this book.

Emily Brontë speaks of dreams, dreams that pass through the mind "like wine through water, and alter the colour" of thoughts. If the experience of reading *Wuthering Heights* feels like a suspension in a state of waking nightmare, what a richly-hued vision of the fantastical it is.



Penistone Crag - a rock at the top of Ponden Kirk - is believed to have been Emily Brontë's inspiration for the place where Cathy and Heathcliff went to be alone.

Author



Sophie Alexandra Frazer, Doctoral candidate in English, University of Sydney

Detailed Analysis of Wuthering Heights

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'Wuthering Heights' Themes, Symbols, Literary Devices

A Novel About Love, Hate, Class, and Revenge

By

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<https://www.thoughtco.com/wuthering-heights-themes-symbols-literary-devices-4689046>

While love seems to be the prevailing theme of *Wuthering Heights*, the novel is much more than a romantic love story. Intertwined with the (non-consummated) passion of Heathcliff and Cathy are hatred, revenge, and social class, the ever-prevailing issue in Victorian literature.

Love

A meditation on the nature of love permeates the entirety of *Wuthering Heights*. Of course, the most important relationship is the one between Cathy and Heathcliff, which is all-consuming and brings Cathy to fully identify with Heathcliff,

to the point that she says “I am Heathcliff.” Their love is everything but simple, though. They betray one another and themselves in order to marry a person for whom they feel a tamer—but convenient—kind of love. Interestingly, despite its intensity, the love between Cathy and Heathcliff is never consummated. Even when Heathcliff and Cathy are reunited in their afterlife, they do not rest peacefully. Instead, they haunt the moorland as ghosts.

The love that develops between young Catherine and Hindley’s son, Hareton, is a paler and gentler version of the love between Cathy and Heathcliff, and it’s poised for a happy ending.

Hate and Revenge

Heathcliff hates as fiercely as he used to love Cathy, and most of his actions are motivated by a desire of vengeance. Throughout the novel, he resorts to exact some form of retribution from all those who, in his mind, had wronged him: Hindley (and his progeny) for mistreating him, and the Lintons (Edgar and Isabella) for taking Cathy away from him.

Oddly, despite his all-consuming love for Cathy, he is not particularly nice towards her daughter, Catherine. Instead, while assuming the role of the stereotypical villain, he kidnaps her, forces her to marry his sickly son, and generally mistreats her.

Social Class

Wuthering Heights is fully immersed in the class-related issues of the Victorian era, which were not just a matter of affluence. The characters show that birth, the source of income, and family connections played a relevant role in determining someone’s place in society, and people usually accepted that place.

Wuthering Heights portrays a class-structured society. The Lintons were part of the professional middle class, and the Earnshaws were a little below the Lintons. Nelly Dean was lower-middle class, as she worked non-manual labor (servants were superior to manual laborers). Heathcliff, an orphan, used to occupy the lowest rung in society in the *Wuthering Heights* universe, but when Mr. Earnshaw openly favored him, he went against societal norms.

Class is also why Cathy decides to marry Edgar and not Heathcliff. When Heathcliff returns to the heath a well-dressed, moneyed, and educated man, he still remains an outcast from society. Class also explains Heathcliff's attitude towards Hindley's son, Hareton. He debases Hareton the way Hindley had debased him, thereby enacting a reverse class-motivated revenge.

Literary Device: Multiple Narrators Within a Frame Story

Wuthering Heights is mainly told by two narrators, Lockwood and his own narrator, Nelly, who tells him about the events that took place in *Wuthering Heights* and *Thrushcross Grange*. However, other narrators are interspersed throughout the novel. For example, when Lockwood finds Cathy's diary, we are able to read important details about her childhood spent with Heathcliff in the moors. In addition, Isabella's letter to Nelly shows us firsthand the abuse she suffered at the hands of Heathcliff. All of the voices in the novel create a choral narrative by offering multiple points of view of the lives of the inhabitants of *Thrushcross Grange* and *Wuthering Heights*.

It's worth noting that no storyteller is fully objective. Although Lockwood might appear removed, once he meets the masters of *Wuthering Heights*, he becomes involved with them and loses his objectivity. Likewise, Nelly Dean, while at first appearing to be an outsider, is actually a flawed narrator, at least morally. She often picks sides between characters and changes allegiances—sometimes she works with Cathy, other times she betrays her.

Literary Device: Doubles and Opposites

Brontë arranges several elements of her novel into pairs that both differ and have similarities with one another. For example, Catherine and Heathcliff perceive themselves as being identical. Cathy and her daughter, Catherine, look much alike, but their personalities differ. When it comes to love, Cathy is split between her socially appropriate marriage to Edgar and her bond with Heathcliff.

Similarly, the estates *Wuthering Heights* and *Thrushcross Grange* represent opposing forces and values, yet the two houses are bonded through marriage and tragedy in both generations. Even Nelly and Lockwood, the two narrators, embody this dualism. Background-wise, they could not be more different, yet, with Nelly being too involved in the events and

Lockwood being too far removed, they are both unreliable narrators.

Literary Device: Using Nature to Describe a Character

Nature plays an important role in *Wuthering Heights* as both an empathetic participant in the setting of the novel—a moorland is prone to winds and storms—, and as a way to describe the characters’ personalities. Cathy and Heathcliff are usually associated with images of wilderness, while the Lintons are associated with pictures of cultivated land. Cathy likens Heathcliff’s soul to the arid wilderness of the moors, while Nelly describes the Lintons as honeysuckles, cultivated and fragile. When Heathcliff speaks about Edgar’s love for Cathy, he says, “He might as well plant an oak in a flower-pot and expect it to thrive, as imagine he can restore her to vigor in the soil of his shallow cares!”

Symbols: The Ragged Wuthering Heights vs. the Pristine Thrushcross Grange

As an estate, Wuthering Heights is a farmhouse in the moorlands ruled by the cruel and ruthless Hindley. It symbolizes the wildness of both Cathy and Heathcliff. By contrast, Thrushcross Grange, all adorned in crimson, represents cultural and societal norms. When Cathy is bitten by the guard dogs of Thrushcross Grange and she's brought into the Lintons' orbit, the two realities begin to clash. The "chaos" of Wuthering Heights wreaks havoc in the Lintons' peaceful and seemingly idyllic existence, as Cathy's marriage to Edgar precipitates Heathcliff's vengeful actions.

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Wuthering Heights - Critical Review

<https://www.teenbookrecommendations.com/single-post/2020/08/03/wuthering-heights-critical-essay>

I read Charlotte Bronte's 1847 novel 'Wuthering Heights' after reading the article 'Interrogating the Other - Stoker,

Bronte and Shelley' which addressed Bronte's exploration of the double in comparison to Frankenstein and Dracula. After being interested in the double for a while, through reading and comparing different novels' exploration of it, I was interested to see how Bronte portrayed it. Bronte explores the double in a different way to other novels I have read: through exploring it in many different means: one being the identity of the 'dual nature' being made up of two characters, rather than two sides of one. This unique exploration interested me as it necessarily then looked into ideas of love, societal boundaries and identity. Bronte's exploration of duality extends from just this to the identity of Heathcliff. It questions whether he was a villain or victim, and what that means for the message of the novel and the idea of outsiders as well as the conflicting duality of societal boundaries juxtaposing with the laws of our own nature, commented on through the juxtaposition of Catherine's attitude and relationship to Heathcliff and Edgar. Furthermore, the use of the double in terms of generations questions the possibilities that humanity can reach.

Firstly, through looking at the duality of Heathcliff's nature, one could argue that one interpretation is that Heathcliff portrays the evil 'other' and the haunting identity of the tale. This can be seen through the fact he is described to be 'not a human being' but to behave like an 'incarnate goblin.' The noun 'goblin' accompanied with the premodifier 'incarnate' links this idea of the supernatural directly to Heathcliff. This can be seen further through the description of Heathcliff's eyes: as they are described as 'basilisk eyes' and 'clouded windows of hell'. I think the description of the eyes is particularly interesting since Heathcliff is never a pure narrator in the novel, therefore the description of eyes as a 'window of hell' seems to be the closest the readers can get to his interior consciousness, and therefore true identity. This is carried throughout the novel as it is observed that his corpse resembles a 'goblin', suggesting that even when he has lost human consciousness he remains a threatening character. Charlotte Bronte, the author of 'Jane Eyre', seems to agree with the viewpoint that Heathcliff portrays the

demon, as she describes him as a 'man's shape animated by a demonlife - a ghouf.'

However, it is important for the reader to remember that all these descriptions are subjective, as they come from two narrators: both Nelly primarily, and then Lockwood. This unreliability of narration comments on the subjectiveness of perception of other people, as the debate about the true identity of Heathcliff is present throughout the novel. Heathcliff is automatically seen as an outsider, as he is labelled as a 'gypsy brat' who seems to be talking 'gibberish.' This is further supported by his actual name, as he never gains a family name, but instead, Heathcliff is used for 'both for Christain and surname.' This sense of lacking a human name automatically labels him as a victim and outsider, and almost gives him an inevitable fate of fulfilling the prophecy of his name: to act without accordance to natural and traditional humaneness. Therefore, although descriptors in the novel, and how we see Heathcliff act, seem to be representative of something evil and demonic, there seems to be an underneath sense that he is vulnerable due to the fact he is an outsider in society, therefore treated differently, therefore subject to a fate of responsiveness to this.

This debate is never concluded in the novel and his identity is constantly juxtaposed. We see this through Isabella's inquiry: "Is Mr Heathcliff a man? If so, is he mad? And if not, is he a devil?'. The contrast of 'man' 'mad' and 'devil' summarizes the question of Heathcliff. However, the order of the triadic structure, moving from 'man' to 'devil', could be interpreted as a sense of Heathcliff progressing into a devil: He was a man, but then condemned by society as inhumane, leaving him to become mad, and therefore ultimately a devil. However, this interpretation could be completely unintentional through the repetition of 'if so' meaning madness and demonic is an either-or option. However, the reader could conclude that Heathcliff does incorporate all these three identities. This idea could be interpreted further through the description of Heathcliff as he 'howled, not like a man, but like a savage beast getting

goaded to death with knives and spears.' The verb 'howled' as well as the simile 'like a savage beast' suggests that Heathcliff is inhumane, supernatural, evil and threatening: exaggerated through the adjective 'savage.' However, this is juxtaposed in the same quotation through the passiveness of 'getting goaded to death with knives and spears.' The passive verb phrase 'getting goaded' suggests vulnerability, as he is being damaged by 'knives and spears' to his death. Furthermore, the verb 'howled', linking Heathcliff to an animal, could be another hint at his victimisation, since its connotations to animals could suggest a lack of freedom of speech or action. Therefore, the description and language used describing Heathcliff raises debates about not only his true identity but the reasons as to why he is considered evil or demonic. James Twitchell, a literary critic, concludes this duality of Heathcliff's nature and interpretation, as he states that Heathcliff is 'both parasite and host, oppressor and victim, vampire and vampirised.' However, it could be suggested that these two interpretations don't offer two contrasting ideas of his identity: but instead one is the reasoning for the other.

Bronte further explores ideas of duality through the juxtaposition between Heathcliff and Edgar, and Catherine's relation to each of them. Through Catherine's inability to choose to love Heathcliff, and choice of Edgar: who is someone ingrained in society and the demands within it, we see this duality of both their identity and what comes with it. Through choosing Edgar, it shows the nature of society: as she chooses someone who has a high status in society, instead of considered an outsider of it. In an article I read, it suggested that Edgar and Heathcliff were two opposing parts of Catherine's self. However, I think it instead could be argued that Edgar instead represents not the true part of herself, but an idealistic vision of a part of herself. Catherine shows the want, and sometimes necessary demand, to fit into society, and therefore Edgar represents this vision and aspiration of fitting into Christian morality, adult sexuality, maternal duty and societal demands. This choice of Catherine gives a sense of failure to her love with

Heathcliff, an idea that their love is only a childhood ideal and that level of passion is not possible to bring into maturity.

However, the idea of Edgar as her aspirational self and successor and victor of society through Catherine's choice to marry him, is juxtaposed with the inevitable and passionate love that Catherine and Heathcliff are portrayed to have. This juxtaposition is blatantly laid out by Catherine as she claims that "my love for Linton is like the foliage in the woods. Time will change it, I'm well aware, as winter changes the trees" compared to "my love for Heathcliff resembles the eternal rocks beneath." The comparison of her love with Edgar to the seasons: "as winter changes the trees" creates not only this sense of temporality and mortality to their love but also a sense that it is a subject to the laws of nature. This is juxtaposed with the eternal sense of her love for Heathcliff: as she portrays it won't alter with time, comparing it to the foundation of the universe, unaltered by objective time. This imperishability creates a supernatural sense to their love, not subject to the laws of the natural world, and therefore superior to her decisions regarding marriage with Edgar.

This sense of their love is further escalated through the duality of their nature, as Catherine states "Nelly, I am Heathcliff" and "whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same." This statement reminded me of the idea of homoousios in the trinity: the idea of the same substance making up the two identities. This again, suggests their love as something superior to nature's norms and laws that human corpses are natural to, making a comparison between the material and emotional, with the latter as superior.

This superiority of their love is further confirmed through their passion's victory at the end of the novel. When Catherine is dead, the barrier between herself and Heathcliff still remains due to life and death. Catherine is described to be seen at the window by Lockwood, describing that 'my fingers closed on the fingers of a little, ice-cold hand.'

Therefore, the window that Catherine's ghost is haunting could be interpreted as an extended metaphor of the barrier between the natural and supernatural world. Heathcliff, when alive, asks Catherine to haunt him, as well as breaks into her coffin, so they can try and break the boundaries of the natural and supernatural and be together but is never successful in his endeavour. However, When Heathcliff dies, there is a sense that they are united through the observation of 'the master's window swinging open' in the room in which he has died. This suggests that Heathcliff has finally overcome the barrier between himself and Catherine, as the window that barred Catherine for so long is now open. This is further supported through Joseph's claim that they see them looking out of the window 'on every night since his death.' This Romantic idea suggests the strength of love and passion, in which despite their love not being possible in the natural world: due to societal constraints, it transcends this world and lives on eternally.

This idea of eternal love could be further interpreted through the second part of the novel: in which it could be suggested that the next generation become shadows of the last, as Cathy, an echo of Catherine, turns to love Hareton, the social outcast echo of Heathcliff. This mirroring can be seen in Cathy's declaration of her love for Edgar arguing that "I love him better than myself". Cathy's actions, almost represent an ideal for what Catherine could have done with Heathcliff: as Cathy does what Catherine didn't, and rebukes societal demands and prejudices to achieve an understanding and love of Hareton. This duality to the novel in which two stories of two generations are shown, in which one gives into and the next overcomes society's expectation further suggests the victory of love and passion.

Therefore, the sense of duality is commented on throughout and through many different means in the novel. The duality of Heathcliff's nature explores the subjectivity of people's identity as well as the duality within one's nature, due to natural and societal demands, which therefore also explores the unreliability of the narration. This sense of duality is explored through the two identities of Edgar and Heathcliff,

and what they represent: in which Heathcliff represents the passionate love and emotion that the human condition is subject to, which comes into conflict of societal expectations that Edgar represents. With this, Heathcliff and Catherine represent the idea of doubles: as they are "reflections of a unified self" (Rosemary Jackson). Lastly, the second part of the novel, which narrates the love of Hareton and Cathy, creates further this sense of duality in different generations, while portraying the eternal nature of love and passion as the love of Heathcliff and Catherine seem to intertwine into it. The unreliability of narration itself is a synecdoche for the debates and questionings that the novel provides, as Bronte urges the reader to engage and decide for themselves the answers to these questions on morality, identity, justice and love that have a constant presence throughout the novel.

Analysis of Wuthering Heights from the Perspective of Eco-Criticism

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https://www.scirp.org/html/7-2820104_51095.htm

ABSTRACT

environment, the relationship between the human beings and the nature reflected in *Wuthering Heights* drives the modern people to think deeply.

Keywords:

Nature, Civilization, Nature, *Wuthering Heights*, Thrushcross Grange

1. Introduction

Wuthering Heights published in 1847 is the only novel of Emily Bronte. The novel received a universal cold acceptance and severe derogation at its first appearance, but in the 20th century, there appeared "a tide of Emily". Many experts and critics analyzed *Wuthering Heights* from various perspectives. English critic, Cecil, regarded Emily was a mysterious person. Keitel thought that *Wuthering Heights* was a good theme of class struggling theory. And Virginia Woolf viewed *Wuthering Heights* as a more complicated novel than *Jane Eyre* (Yang, 1983). *Wuthering Heights* is a profound novel and it reveals the changing relationships between human beings and the nature from people's worship of nature, reverence for nature to excessive exploitation of nature to respect for nature and the ecological belief of harmonious relationship between human beings and nature. It is an eternal topic that how nature gets along with civilization in the long human beings history. And it is also a core topic in ecology literature. So, *Wuthering Heights* is analyzed from the perspective of ecology to enhance people's ecological consciousness and to warn people to protect nature and to be friendly with nature. First, the paper conveys *Wuthering Heights* and the residents in it are the representatives of nature, while Thrushcross Grange and the residents in it symbolize civilization. Later, we make a comparative analysis between the relationships of characters in *Wuthering Heights* and the changing relationships between nature and human beings to show the opposition and integration between civilization and nature.

Most experts focus on such points as revenge, love, language, etc. (Tang, 2008), though some experts have analyzed *Wuthering Heights* from the perspective of eco-feminism (Zhou, 2013) and Emily Bronte's ecological consciousness (Huang, 2014), while there are few people to see it in terms of the relationship between civilization and nature.

2. Nature—Wuthering Heights and the Residents in It

2.1. The Residence of Nature—Wuthering Heights

At the beginning of the novel, readers can feel the smell of strong wildness. Lockwood describes it like this “‘Wuthering’ being a significant provincial adjective, descriptive of atmospheric tumult to which its station is exposed in stormy weather... one may guess the power of the north wind blowing over the edge... as if craving alms of the sun” (Bronte, 2010). A rough and wild picture comes into the paper and appears before the readers. When spring is coming or the sun appears after a long rainy days, wonderful music performed by nature will fill the air in Wuthering Heights. “Both the valley and the stream are filled with gurgling and melodious water, which is the wonderful sounds of nature before the summer leaves rustling” (Bronte, 2010).

The residents of Wuthering Heights rigidly observe the life style of working at the sunrise and returning at the sunset. They have a close relationship with the nature. Equal and intimate relationship can be observed especially when old Shawn is alive. “yet it was not cold, and we were all together—I, a little removed from the hearth, busy at my knitting, and Joseph reading his Bible near the table (for the servants generally sat in the house then, after their work was done)” (Bronte, 2010). This is a harmonious and wonderful picture in the hugs of nature.

2.2. The Son of Nature—Young Catherine and Heathcliff

The characteristics of Catherine and Heathcliff are rough, grumpy and unruly but they are energetic, passionate and enthusiastic. The most enjoyable thing for both of them is to play in nature and they are the real children of nature. The wind roaring and cliff which is not suitable for survival in the eyes of civilized people are paradise for Catherine and Heathcliff. Catherine and Heathcliff love nature and respect for freedom. Whenever they feel upset or there is a conflict with others, they will go to the wilderness, enjoy the embrace of nature, talk to the nature and get consolation. In nature, they will never feel hungry or tired. They are like angels, breathing the fresh air greedily, enjoying the beautiful wild flowers, carefree and

relaxed in the embrace of nature. Freedom and comfort are filled with their hearts. Wildness makes them forget to return home and they are willing to enjoy it regardless of a severe punishment. In the novel, Dean said: "But it was one of their chief amusements to run away to the moors in the morning and remain there all day, and the after punishment grew a mere thing to laugh at" (Bronte, 2010).

3. Civilization—Thrushcross Grange and the Residents in It

3.1. The Residence of Civilization

"Ah! It was beautiful—a splendid place carpeted with crimson, and crimson—covered chairs and tables, and a pure white ceiling bordered by gold, a shower of glass—drops hanging in silver chains from the centre, and shimmering with little soft tapers" (Bronte, 2010). The first description of Thrushcross Grange is out of young Heathcliff. And the description includes such words as gold and silver which modern civilized people are interested and love. From the description, we can also discern that the decoration of Thrushcross Grange matches the taste of the modern people-luxury.

3.2. The Spokesmen of Civilization—Edgar Linton and His Family Members

"Isabella—I believe she is eleven, a year younger than Cathy—lay screaming at the farther end of the room... Edgar stood on the hearth weeping silently... from their mutual accusations, we understood they had nearly pulled in two between them" (Bronte, 2010). There is a great difference between the description of Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange. In Thrushcross Grange, although Edgar and Isabella are brother and sister, they are weeping and screaming respectively, accusing each other and the distance between them are the whole room. From the behaviors of Edgar and Isabella and the special distance between them the readers are easy to feel the alienation of civilized people.

The residents in Thrushcross Grange are elegant, delicate and frail. Dean remembered that the voice of Edgar is low and gentle. The death of Old Linton and his wife is a good proof for their

fragile body. Because of Catherine's illness, old Mrs. Linton insisted on conveying Catherine to Thrushcross Grange. Unfortunately, she and her husband both took the fever, and died.

Catherine and Heathcliff are rough, rude and carefree and they are the children of nature. While Edgar and Isabella are gentle, delicate and fragile and they are the representative of civilized people.

4. The Opposition and Integration of Civilization and Nature

Wuthering Heights is the symbol of nature, and it is exposed to the nature and enjoys in the nature. The residents in it are rough, rude, unruly but energetic, vigorous and enthusiastic. On the contrary, Thrushcross Grange is the symbol of civilization and it is filled with fragility and quietness. The residents in it are gentle, fragile, rich and snobbish. Catherine destroys the balance and independence between Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange, especially after her marriage with Edgar. Catherine's marriage, the relationship between Heathcliff and Catherine and the relationship between Catherine and Edgar show, to some extent, the relationship between human beings and nature in the long history.

Young Heathcliff and Catherine enter into Thrushcross Grange by chance, and thus they destroyed the balance and independence of Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange and the life style of their residents. Great changes happen in Catherine after her return from Thrushcross Grange. Obviously, it is the first conflict between civilization and nature. Later, Catherine becomes the wife of Edgar, who is the representative of civilization. After getting married, Catherine seems to earn the civilized behaviors and roughness and rudeness are far away from her. A happy and harmonious picture appears in Thrushcross Grange. This picture is the same as the situation of the beginning of the invention of modern technology. People thought they conquered nature, they grasped nature and they are the owner of nature. But very soon, Heathcliff returns. He returns with strong revenge. As a result, Catherine dies because she is not able to deal with the triangle relationship among she

and Heathcliff and Edgar. After Catherine, the representative of nature, dies, Edgar, the spokesman of civilization, changes too. He becomes upset, and he is always in a low mood and he quits a lot of social roles. Catherine's death, Heathcliff's revenge and Edgar's tortures reveal human beings are not really able to conquer nature. The fact is the transitory and seeming victory is at the expense of destroying the balance between human beings and nature.

Little Catherine is brought up by his father, Edgar Linton, who is the representative of civilization, so little Catherine is the spokesman of the new generation of civilization. At the end of the novel, the marriage of little Catherine and Hareton is the integration of civilization and nature and it predicts there will be a harmonious relationship between human beings and nature.

5. Enlightenment

With the fast development of science and technology, people exploit nature excessively and take from nature crazily. People try their best to meet their increasing material requirement by using science and technology, which outstrips available resources. As a result, a series of problems of environmental pollution and ecological imbalance appear (Lu, 2000). Such problems as land desertification, grassland degradation and soil erosion are especially serious. Meanwhile, many important resources and energies like soil, forest, water and mineral are also in serious shortage. Furthermore, the deterioration of ecological environment has been retarding economic sustainable development. This situation is the same as the situation of the main characters in *Wuthering Heights*. Heathcliff, the representative of nature takes on his crazy revenge on Catherine and Edgar, the spokesman of civilization after his return.

—Analysis of *Wuthering Heights* from the Perspective of Eco-Criticism Nowadays, people have to face up the current ecological problems and think about how to get along with nature. Gradually, people begin to realize that they are not able to conquer nature and they are not the owner of nature. The only right and proper way is to utilize and develop nature properly and reasonably. At the end of the novel, little Catherine,

the new representative of civilization, gets married with Hareton, the spokesman of nature, which reveals the new relationship of modern people and nature. People start to respect for nature, protect nature and learn to set up a good relationship with nature. Only in this way can the society move forward healthily.

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Wuthering Heights Analysis



- Author **Dr. Marcus**
- Published: August 25, 2024

<https://kaitlynnessays.com/wuthering-heights-analysis/>

Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* is a novel that has intrigued and mystified readers since its publication in 1847. The book, often classified as a classic of English literature, defies easy categorization. It is a story of intense, often destructive passion, a reflection on the complexities of human relationships, and a critique of the rigid social hierarchies of 19th-century England. Set against the wild backdrop of the Yorkshire moors, the story follows the tempestuous relationship between Catherine Earnshaw and Heathcliff, two characters bound by a love that transcends social norms and even death itself.

Its raw emotional intensity and vivid depiction of the human psyche continue to captivate readers and scholars alike, cementing *Wuthering Heights* as a timeless classic worthy of ongoing study and discussion.

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Kindly visit these Web Pages:

- 01]** <https://gitmind.com/wuthering-heights-summary.html>
- 02]** <https://literariness.org/2019/03/25/analysis-of-emily-brontes-wuthering-heights/>
- 03]** <https://jvc.oup.com/2020/03/24/the-radical-politics-of-wuthering-heights/>



Movie Adaptation

'Wuthering Heights'

<https://variety.com/2024/film/news/emerald-fennell-wuthering-heights-movie-1236069006/>

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The Yorkshire Moors are about to get freaky.

Emerald Fennell is teasing her own film adaptation of "Wuthering Heights," the famed 1847 gothic novel by Emily Brontë about two families living in northern England.

The "Saltburn" filmmaker posted about the project on social media, sharing a graphic that reads, "Be with me always - Take any form - Drive me mad," a line from the novel. Insiders tell Variety that the filmmaker will reteam with MRC, the studio behind her hit "Saltburn."

There have been a handful of screen adaptations of "Wuthering Heights" throughout the years, including William Wyler's 1939 film starring Laurence Olivier and Merle Oberon; Robert Fuest's 1970 movie with Timothy Dalton and Anna Calder-Marshall; and Peter Kosminsky's 1992 film led by Ralph Fiennes and Juliette Binoche. There have been two TV movies — in 2009 with Tom Hardy and Charlotte Riley, and in 2011 with James Howson and Kaya Scodelario — and two series, in 1978 and 1998.

Fennell's latest film, 2023's much-discussed "Saltburn," starring Jacob Elordi and a bathwater-slurping Barry Keoghan, had a heavy gothic influence.

"I've always been obsessed with the gothic," Fennell wrote in a January 2024 column for the Los Angeles Times. "Whether it was Edward Gorey's children who are variously choked by peaches, sucked dry by leeches or smothered by rugs; Du Maurier's imperiled heroines or the disturbing erotic power of Angela Carter's fairy tales, the gothic world has always had me in its grip. It's a genre where comedy and horror, revulsion and desire, sex and death are forever entwined, where every exchange is heavy with the threat of violence, or sex or both."

Fennell's other works include the 2020 rape-revenge thriller "Promising Young Woman," which nabbed five Oscar nominations, and "Killing Eve," on which she served as Season 2 head writer and executive producer.

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Everything We Know About the 'Wuthering Heights' Movie with Jacob Elordi

The 2026 film adaptation of the 1847 novel *Wuthering Heights* is bringing a star-studded cast, including Jacob Elordi, Margot Robbie, and more.

Published 04.16.2025 by Grace Clarke

<https://www.lofficielusa.com/film-tv/everything-to-know-about-wuthering-heights-movie-cast-jacob-elordi-plot-release-date>

In the realm of literary adaptations that manage to be both fresh and high-profile, *Wuthering Heights* is shaping up to be the next big thing. Directed, written, and produced by [Emerald Fennell](#), who last stirred the cultural pot with the infamous *Saltburn* film, this upcoming drama is a reimagining of Emily Brontë's 1847 novel, promising a dark dive into one of literature's most volatile love stories. And with [Margot Robbie](#) and [Jacob Elordi](#) at its tragically poetic center, the film is already sparking award season conversations, nearly a year ahead of its release.

Keep reading to get the inside scoop on everything you need to know about the 2026 adaptation of *Wuthering Heights*, starring Jacob Elordi and Margot Robbie.

Leading the film are *Barbie*'s Margot Robbie as Catherine Earnshaw and *Euphoria*'s Jacob Elordi as Heathcliff, two of Hollywood's most coveted actors in 2025. Robbie is shaping up to be the perfect fit for the emotionally layered portrayal that comes with playing Catherine, as she proved herself worthy of an emotionally vulnerable role in *Barbie*. Elordi, who has made a name for himself playing magnetic men and forbidden love interests, feels almost destined for the role of Heathcliff—the orphan turned obsession whose love curdles into vengeance. Elordi may look a little more rugged in this film, however, than in his usual roles, and was recently seen sporting a gold tooth while filming that left fans relieved it's just a costume.

The supporting cast is equally impressive, with Shazad Latif (*Star Trek: Discovery*) playing Edgar Linton, Catherine's other suitor and eventual husband, while Hong Chau (*The Whale*, *The Menu*) takes on the role of Nelly Dean, the servant and narrative thread of the story. Alison Oliver, fresh off her breakout in *Saltburn*, reunites with co-star Jacob Elordi, starring as Isabella Linton.

Rounding out the ensemble are newcomers Charlotte Mellington, Vy Nguyen, and Owen Cooper (*Adolescence*) —playing the younger versions of Catherine, Heathcliff, and Nelly.

Wuthering Heights is a tale of obsessive love and revenge set against the bleak, windswept moors of 19th-century England. It is Emily Brontë's only novel, and is favored as one of the best gothic literary novels that entertains a different, haunting perspective of love.

At its core is the tumultuous relationship between Catherine Earnshaw and Heathcliff—an orphan taken in by her family who grows up to be deeply in love with Catherine, but tormented by social exclusion. As their bond breaks, Heathcliff seeks revenge.

Fennell's *Wuthering Heights* is expected to honor the raw emotional chaos of Brontë's original text, but we can expect Fennell's signature blend of high opulence and decay, following the trail she blazed in *Saltburn*.

Wuthering Heights Release Date

Although it still seems far into the future, mark your calendars: Wuthering Heights will hit theaters on **February 14, 2026—Valentine's Day**. Definitely an intentional twist, given the film's themes of doomed love and emotional destruction, perfect for all hopeless romantics and yearners of the world. And with Robbie and Elordi leading the campaign trail, the film is expected to dominate box offices, awards chatter, and social media buzz.

Until then, prepare for trailers and fan debates over whether Catherine and Heathcliff are soulmates or simply soul-crushers (I'm a hopeless romantic, so soulmates it is).

Also, kindly visit the Web Page:

<https://www.harpersbazaar.com/uk/culture/culture-news/a64306033/wuthering-heights-cast-trailer-release-date-controversy/>



'Wuthering Heights' 1939 film

Poetry Foundation

Emily Brontë

{Ref: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/emily-bronte>}



The only poems by Emily Brontë that were published in her lifetime were included in a slim volume by Brontë and her sisters Charlotte and Anne titled *Poems by Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell* (1846), which sold a mere two copies and received only three unsigned reviews in the months following its publication. The three notices were positive, however, especially with respect to the contributions of Ellis Bell—Emily Brontë. The writer of the review in the 4 July 1846 *Athenaeum*, for example, noted her "fine quaint spirit" and asserted that she had "things to speak that men will be glad to hear,—and an evident power of wing that may reach heights not here attempted." It seemed in 1848, the year of Emily's death, as if this potential were never to be realized. However, Brontë's twenty-one contributions to *Poems* represented only a fraction of the nearly two hundred poems

collected by C. W. Hatfield in his noteworthy edition, *The Complete Poems of Emily Jane Brontë* (1941). Several factors combined to delay the publication of a complete, accurately edited collection of Brontë's poems: her sister Charlotte, who in her heavy-handed revision of seventeen unpublished poems by Brontë to accompany the 1850 edition of *Wuthering Heights*, first published in 1847, went so far as to add lines and whole stanzas; the wide dispersal of Brontë's manuscripts after their sale in 1895 by Charlotte's widower, Arthur Bell Nicholls; and finally the difficulty in reading the manuscripts, some of which Brontë wrote in a tiny, crabbed script on irregular bits of paper. Ranging from 1836 to 1846—fortunately, Brontë dated all but about a dozen of her poems—these verses reveal that she had indeed reached the heights attempted in the poems in the 1846 volume.

Unfortunately the student of Brontë's biography cannot rely on the signposts she left on her manuscripts and must try to reconstruct her life from a scarcity of material. The plays and stories she wrote with her sister Anne about the imaginary land of Gondal have not survived. Her other prose consists of seven essays in French, a few notes, and four birthday letters she exchanged with Anne. Much of what we know about Brontë is seen at a remove, through Charlotte's writings about her or Elizabeth Gaskell's biography of Charlotte. Myths about the family abound, but Brontë seems to be the most mysterious figure of all of them. She is alternately the isolated artist striding the Yorkshire moors, the painfully shy girl-woman unable to leave the confines of her home, the heterodox creator capable of conceiving the amoral Heathcliff, the brusque intellect unwilling to deal with normal society, and the ethereal soul too fragile to confront the temporal world. There is probably an element of truth as well as hyperbole in each of these views. Again, the fault lies in part with Charlotte, who in her effort to assuage the critical charge of "coarseness" aimed at the author of *Wuthering Heights* wrote a "Biographical Notice of Ellis and Acton Bell" to accompany the 1850 edition of that novel and Anne's *Agnes Grey*. Of Brontë she wrote, "Under an unsophisticated culture, inartificial tastes, and an unpretending outside, lay a secret power and fire that might have informed the brain and kindled the veins of a hero; but she had no worldly wisdom; her powers were unadapted to the practical business of life. An interpreter ought always to have stood between her and the world." The real identity of the poet who

created the fierce queens of Gondal and the visionaries of the subjective poetry lies somewhere between the shadowy myths about Brontë and the documented facts.

Emily Brontë was born on 30 July 1818 in the parsonage at Thornton in Yorkshire to the Reverend Patrick Brontë and Maria Branwell Brontë, the fifth of their sixth children after Maria, Elizabeth, Charlotte, and Branwell and the only daughter to be given a middle name. Both parents displayed literary ambitions; Patrick Brontë's *The Cottage in the Wood*, an Evangelical tale supporting Sunday schools and castigating the evils of drinking, was published in 1815, and during the same year Maria Branwell wrote an apparently unpublished piece titled "The Advantages of Poverty, in Religious Concerns," a sincere and pious essay exhorting the faithful to care for the poor. In the year of Emily's birth Patrick's novella *The Maid of Killarney* was also published. Though Brontë continued throughout her life to observe her father's writing of sermons, articles, fiction, and poetry, she lost the example of her bright and vivacious mother shortly after the family's move to Haworth in 1820. Weakened by the birth of six children in as many years (Anne was born 17 January 1820), Maria Branwell was unable to fight off illness and died of cancer on 15 September 1821. Her sister, Elizabeth Branwell, moved into the parsonage that same month to help Patrick care for his young family.

That Yorkshire played an important role in Brontë's life and art is indisputable. Except for several brief absences, she chose to spend her remaining years at the parsonage. However, many of the myths surrounding her life arise from the time immediately after her mother's death, including the isolation of Haworth, the harsh eccentricities of her father, the dour Methodism of Aunt Branwell, and the abnormal upbringing of the Brontë children. Elizabeth Gaskell's *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* (1857), while admirable in many ways, was responsible for some of these errors. Recent biographies, especially Juliet Barker's *The Brontës* (1995), have sought to correct these misconceptions. Barker points out that Haworth was a "busy, industrial township," that Patrick was an involved and caring father who was ordained in the Church of England and was heavily influenced by the Evangelical and Methodist teachings he encountered while studying in Cambridge, that Aunt Branwell's upbringing as a Wesleyan Methodist

brought her closer to the gentler Church of England than to severe Calvinist beliefs, and that the six Brontë children enjoyed a "perfectly normal childhood" filled with games, lessons, religious education, and walks on the moors. Close in age and temperament, they provided each other with plenty of diversions. The Brontës' nursemaid, Sarah Garrs, reported that the children's games "were founded upon what Maria read to them from the newspapers, and the tales brought forth from the father's mines of tradition, history, and romance." Emily's participation in the playacting and daily walks would later significantly influence both her poetry and her fiction.

In 1824 several important changes occurred in the Brontë household. First, Sarah Garrs and her sister Nancy left the family, and Tabitha Aykroyd was engaged. Tabby remained with the Brontës until her death in 1855 and was accorded a place in the Haworth parsonage that far exceeded that of a mere servant. One of the few recorded incidents from Brontë's childhood also occurred during this year and illustrates the normalcy of the Brontë children's upbringing as well as the interest of their father in their development. Patrick Brontë, in helping Gaskell collect appropriate information for her biography of Charlotte, wrote her in a 30 July 1855 letter that he had used a mask to elicit honest responses from his children to his individual queries, "thinking that they knew more than I had yet discovered." He gave each one the mask and "told them all to stand and speak boldly." He asked Brontë, then aged about six, what he should do with her brother, Branwell, "who was sometimes a naughty boy." She answered, "Reason with him, and when he won't listen to reason, whip him." This answer seems to have arisen more from Emily's experience as a member of a large, active, and noisy set of siblings than from a quiet, doleful, and studious group.

More importantly, 1824 was the year that Patrick sent all of his daughters except Anne to Cowan Bridge School, a "School for Clergymen's Daughters." Patrick, though in possession of a perpetual curacy at Haworth, owned no land or inheritance and therefore had few options for providing for the future of his children. As in most Victorian families the bulk of the family income would be spent on the son's education. Yet Patrick knew he needed to enable his daughters to seek livings, most probably as teachers or governesses, and hence they needed to be educated. Miss Evans, the superintendent of the new school, called Brontë a "darling child" and "little

petted Em," and the admissions register referred to her as "quite the pet nursling of the school." Tragically for the Brontë sisters, during the time they attended Cowan Bridge School it closely resembled the fictional Lowood School presented by Charlotte in *Jane Eyre* (1847). The staff at Cowan Bridge School was careless with respect to food preparation, and during the winter the rooms were often cold. The Brontë sisters had always been susceptible to coughs and colds, and the difficult physical conditions at Cowan Bridge most likely hastened Maria's and Elizabeth's contraction of consumption. They were sent home to die in 1825; after Patrick saw how ill Elizabeth was, he went to Cowan Bridge to collect Charlotte and Brontë himself. According to most biographers the deaths of their elder sisters most profoundly affected Charlotte, who had more complete memories of their deceased mother and now had also lost the sisters who had filled the maternal role. As Barker notes, all of Charlotte's heroines were orphans, and nearly all of the children in *Wuthering Heights* also become motherless. In her poetry many of Brontë's Gondal characters are also motherless, orphaned, or the children of parents who abandon them.

Between 1826 and 1829 Emily began music lessons, completed samplers, and made drawings and sketches of the natural subjects such as birds to which she was drawn for the remainder of her life. Her close observations of birds, animals, plants, and the changing skies over Haworth form a significant part of her poetry. During this time Branwell acquired several sets of toy figures such as soldiers, Turkish musicians, and Indians. These toys were the impetus for the founding of the imaginary lands of Angria and Gondal. The children began to write plays about the figures, with Emily and Charlotte composing "bed plays" that they kept secret from the adults as well as from Branwell and Anne. In "Tales of the Islanders" (1829) Charlotte gave a history of the early plays, underscoring Emily's early affiliation with the works of Sir Walter Scott, for she chose the Isle of Arran for her island and Scott for her "cheif [*sic*] man." This affinity grew with Aunt Branwell's 1828 New Year's gift to "her dear little nephew and nieces," a copy of Scott's *The Tales of a Grandfather* (1827-1829). In addition to Scott's works the Brontë children drew material for their plays from the family library of Aesop's *Fables*, *The Arabian Nights' Entertainment*, and wood-engraver Thomas Bewick's *History of British Birds*. Their most important influence during these early years was most likely *Blackwood's Magazine*, whose

satires, political commentaries, and extensive book reviews provided them with a wealth of detail that seeded their imaginations throughout their early years of creativity.

In 1831, after Charlotte left for Roe Head School, Emily and Anne began to concentrate their energies exclusively on the Gondal saga, distinct from the Angrian fantasies of their brother and sister, a special form of imaginative play in which the two younger sisters alone engaged for the remainder of their lives. Emily's first mention of Gondal occurs in her diary paper for 24 November 1834, a series of notes written by Emily and Anne about every four years and the earliest piece of Brontë's writing to have survived. The first paragraph of the entry reads, "Taby said just now Come Anne pilloputate (i.e. pill a potato) Aunt has come into the kitchen just now and said where are you feet Anne Anne answered On the floor Aunt papa opened the parlour door and gave Branwell a letter saying here Branwell read this and show it to your Aunt and Charlotte--The Gondals are discovering the interior of Gaaldine Sally Mosley is washing in the back kitchen." In addition to noting the astonishing absence of punctuation conventions in the sixteen-year-old Emily's diary entry, critics uniformly point to her seamless fit of the imaginary Gondal into the fabric of everyday events in the Brontë kitchen.

Scholars such as W. D. Paden in *An Investigation of Gondal* (1958) have deftly recovered much of the history of Gondal despite Charlotte's destruction of the plays and prose after her sisters' deaths, from the birthday notes, the undated lists of character names Anne wrote, the list of place names she wrote into a copy of J. Goldsmith's *A Grammar of General Geography* (1819), and Emily's and Anne's Gondal poems. Most recognize, however, their own creative responsibility in such a reconstruction, for while Brontë wrote almost seventy poems that are undoubtedly part of the Gondal story, the majority of her poems cannot always be attributed to Gondal, and many are clearly more personal lyrics. Scholars therefore find Fannie Ratchford's *Gondal's Queen: A Novel in Verse* (1955), an attempt to fit the whole of Brontë's poetic output into the Gondal fantasy, an interesting but far-fetched effort. What can be determined is that Gondal, according to Anne, was "a large island in the North Pacific" and that Gaaldine was "a large island newly discovered in the South Pacific." The rigorous scenery of these islands derives much from Scott's fiction and is filled with mountains,

heather, and snow. The Gondal stories concern impetuous royalty, political intrigue, love thwarted and abandoned, wars, murders, and assassinations.

In a noteworthy article in 1939 Helen Brown was one of the first critics to point out the influence of George Gordon, Lord Byron, on Brontë's Gondal characters and their isolation, passions, dark crimes, and darker thoughts.

The main character in Brontë's Gondal poems, the speaker of at least fourteen and the subject of many others, is the passionate, dark-haired queen Augusta G. Almeda, or A.G.A., perhaps based on Mary, Queen of Scots and the young Queen Victoria, in whose accession to the throne Brontë took a good deal of interest. A secondary character is Julius Brenzaida, king of Almedore in Gaaldine.

Critical reception of the Gondal poems has been uneven. Some critics reject them for their melodrama, formulaic qualities, and simplistic meters and rhymes. Recently, however, feminist critics have taken special note of the prominent role played by the queen, A.G.A. Christine Gallant, for example, calls attention to the fact that Gondal is "a mythic world emphatically excluding the real world" known to Victorian women, controlled by a "dominating presence of female figures." Teddi Lynn Chichester believes that Brontë was continually working through her own loss of significant female figures, that "through Augusta, Brontë could explore, in private, her need to create a powerful, even indestructible" woman, and that A.G.A. "ultimately reinforced the disturbing connection between mortality and the feminine" that is such a potent undercurrent in Western literature. Richard Benvenuto points out that without the years Brontë spent "developing her Gondal imagination, the mature imagination she did attain would have been a considerably different mode of vision." While a knowledge of the facts of Gondal can deepen the reader's understanding of Brontë's creative life, we can still appreciate the poems for their merits apart from their place in the Gondal saga. In writing the Gondal poems Brontë took on different voices and personae, and the themes of imprisonment and death that inform her better-known poetry were first explored therein. The dark and overpowering emotions first manifested in these poems certainly fed her invention of Catherine and Heathcliff in Wuthering Heights.

The luxury Brontë enjoyed of freely flowing from domestic responsibilities at the parsonage to the world of Gondal and the mental and emotional

sustenance she found therein was cut short in July 1835, when she accompanied Charlotte, now a teacher, to Roe Head. For Brontë--removed from her routine for the first time since she was six years old, extremely reticent and impatient with the other pupils in the school--the experiment was unhappy and unsuccessful. Moreover, because her daily schedule was now rigidly proscribed, she had no time to engage in the intellectually sustaining creation of the Gondal stories, and she was no longer living with Anne, her partner in the fantasy. Charlotte later recalled her firm belief that Brontë "would die if she did not go home, and with this conviction obtained her recall." Charlotte understood only too well the void caused by the absence of "sources purely imaginary": she too grieved for her inability to interact with her visions of Angria. The combination of homesickness and creative deprivation forced Brontë home in October 1835, but her dependence on Yorkshire to free her poetic originality should not be overstated. She forced herself to leave home again two more times, to teach at Law Hill and to study in Brussels, and these journeys broadened rather than stultified her inventive abilities.

Brontë spent the three years following her return from Roe Head at home, and since Anne had replaced her at the school, she became responsible for many of the domestic duties at the parsonage, especially after Tabby broke her leg. Brontë found time, however, to continue the Gondal saga and, more importantly, to practice her poetic craft. Though traumatic, her brief time at Roe Head and subsequent return to Haworth evidently intensified a new resolve to concentrate on her poetry. Her first extant poems are from 1836 and display some of the treatments of nature and death she was to concentrate on for the remainder of her life. For example, in "Will the day be bright or cloudy?" and "High waving heather 'neath stormy blasts ending," a poem Stevie Davies calls a "precocious bravura piece," Brontë adapts her close observation of natural phenomena to poems that examine and accept the two-faceted essence of the day's evolution and the changing weather. In "Start not upon the minster wall" she explores the comforting rather than threatening affinity of the living and the dead.

Brontë's diary paper of 26 June 1837 records Anne's writing of a poem, her own work on a volume of Augusta Almeda's life, Queen Victoria's accession to the throne, and her corresponding interest in the coronation of the

emperors and empresses of Gondal and Gaaldine. She wonders where she and her siblings will be in four years and expresses three times the hope that whether they are in "this drawing room comfortable" or "gone somewhere together comfortable" that all will be for the best. The note is observant and cheerful and perhaps reflects the satisfaction Brontë took in her extensive composition of poetry during the year. Poems such as "The night of storms has passed," "A.G.A. to A.E.," "Now trust a heart that trusts in you," and "Song by Julius Angora" reveal a poetic exploration of Gondal corresponding to her Gondal prose. Her other poems from this period are somewhat problematic for critics in that, as Derek Roper says, they "plainly deal with fictional situations" yet do not belong to the Gondal cycle. Throughout her poetic career Brontë assumed personae who did not necessarily speak for her, and while it is difficult to assign certain poems to her own voice, it is important to be wary of attaching too much significance to the thoughts and feelings expressed in this fictional poetry. However, a poem from 1837 underscores in what seems to be Brontë's voice her need to express herself in poetry. The speaker asks heaven why it has denied the "glorious gift to many given / To speak their thoughts in poetry" and wonders why she cannot transmute her visions, available to her since "careless childhood's sunny time," into poetry. An aspect of this need can also be found in "I'll come when thou art saddest," a poem written in 1837, in which the speaker is the imagination, what Barker calls "the great comforter," upon which all of the Brontës relied for sustenance and consolation.

Brontë continued her poetic productivity throughout 1838, from which twenty-one dated poems have survived. Also surviving from this time are fragments of her translation of Virgil's *Aeneid* and notes on Greek tragedies, evidence that tends to contradict the fallacy that Brontë's was an uneducated mind from which sprang an amazing quantity of poetry and the remarkable *Wuthering Heights*. Sometime in the autumn of 1838 she made the surprising decision to accept a teaching position at Law Hill, a girls' school outside Halifax, a fact recorded in a letter from Charlotte to Ellen Nussey that, though dated October 1836, Edward Chitham revealed was postdated October 1838. Benvenuto speculates that Brontë went to Law Hill because she felt guilty enjoying the pleasures of home while her sisters were laboring at Roe Head. Though Charlotte wrote to Ellen Nussey that Brontë's duties at Law Hill constituted "slavery," Barker points out that Brontë had

time to write what she calls "three outstanding poems." One of these was "A little while, a little while," a poem in which Brontë synchronizes the "dungeon bars" of her duties at school and her disparate choices of imagining during her "hour of rest" either the comforts of Hawthorn, the "spot 'mid barren hills," or Gondal with its "distant, dreamy dim blue chain / Of mountains circling every side." Charlotte was correct in surmising that Brontë would "never stand" the "hard labour" at Law Hill--she left the school in March or April 1839, worn out by homesickness and the lack of time she could devote to poetry and Gondal. Her return home again freed her from the "dungeon bars"; though she apparently wrote no poetry during the first three months of 1839, she left twenty-nine dated poems from the remainder of the year. She revisits some of her favorite natural subjects in poems such as "Mild the mist upon the hill" and "The starry night shall tidings bring," though often nature is unable to give solace to grief-stricken speakers. Brontë takes a more philosophical approach in "I am the only being whose doom," in which the speaker despairs to find "the same corruption" in "my own mind" as she has seen in all of "mankind," and "There was a time when my cheek burned," in which the speaker finds that her ardent devotion to truth, right, and liberty are misplaced, for the "same old world will go rolling on" unaffected by her passion or her indifference.

In her 30 July 1841 birthday note Brontë, though pleased that she and her family are all "stout and hearty," expressed her wish that four years hence she and her sisters will no longer be "dragging on" but will have carried out their "scheme" for setting up a school of their own. Though ultimately the plan was never realized, Emily and Charlotte attempted to improve their teaching prospects by studying French with Constantin Heger at the Pensionnat Heger, a boarding school for girls in Brussels, arriving in February 1842. After he recognized the sisters' intellectual strengths and their aptitude for French, Heger personally tutored them, having them read and analyze works in French and then compose their own essays based on these models. Though Brontë was unable to complete any poems while she was in Brussels, her composition of a prose allegory, "Le Palais de la Mort," influenced the second of the two poems she began, "Self-Interrogation." Both essay and poem personify Death, and in the poem Death logically convinces the human speaker in the dialogue that his life has been empty and that he has nothing left to live for. As Janet Gezari points out, "despite

the ray of hope in the last two lines, this poem is among Brontë's glummost," its bitterness surely reflective of Aunt Branwell's November 1842 death, which caused Brontë and Charlotte to depart the Pensionnat for Haworth. Though Charlotte returned to Brussels in January 1843, Brontë remained in Yorkshire for the remainder of her life.

In February 1844 Brontë began to copy her poems into two notebooks, one titled "Gondal Poems," the other left untitled. Though early critics such as Winifred Gérin distinguished Gondal poems from "personal" poems on the basis of Brontë's division, later critics such as Roper and Barker caution against rigidity in approaching the poetry in this way. The act of copying itself suggests that Brontë took her poetry seriously and wanted to have a more permanent structure for it than scraps of paper allowed, even if at this point she did not even contemplate publication. In the autumn of 1845, however, a momentous discovery occurred. Charlotte recalled, "I accidentally lighted on a MS. volume of verse in my sister Emily's handwriting." Despite Brontë's anger and sense of betrayal at her sister's "unlicensed" intrusion, its "taking hours to reconcile her to the discovery" Charlotte had made and "days to persuade her that such poems merited publication," Brontë eventually was won over to the idea of sending her work out to publishers along with some by Charlotte and Anne. The sisters spent the remainder of the year selecting and revising their poetry, Brontë choosing poems largely written in 1844 and 1845 and being careful to delete any references to the private Gondal. They took the pseudonyms Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell and agreed to publish *Poems* at their own expense with the publishing company of Aylott and Jones in 1846.

Many critics agree that Brontë's poetry from *Poems* is her strongest. Lawrence J. Starzyk, for example, calls attention to the "beautiful lyrics" of "A Day Dream," where the "sustained dialogue of the mind with itself is masterfully executed as the despondent narrator converses with the joyous spirit of nature." Davies refers to "To Imagination" as "that classic, rational and balanced defence of imagination as an alternative faculty to reason." Barker believes that "The Prisoner," originally a Gondal poem, is "rightly one of Emily's most famous, as it includes the powerful and intensely emotional description of the captive's vision." Perhaps because Derek Stanford thinks that Brontë wrote only six major poems, his reading of "Death" and the

"vertiginous and vertical excitement that seems to give this poem wings" is particularly striking. In one of the few stylistic analyses of Brontë's poetry C.

Day Lewis finds that the effect of the rhythm in "Remembrance" is "extremely powerful, extremely appropriate" and that "it is the slowest rhythm I know in English poetry, and the most sombre." Roper concludes simply that "the selection that Emily made for 1846 includes some of her best poems."

Other than a long narrative Gondal poem from late 1846 and a shorter incomplete revision of the same from May 1848, Emily's last poem, much anthologized and perhaps the most commented upon, was "No Coward Soul Is Mine," written in January 1846. Tom Winnifrith calls it a "fitting culmination of Emily's poetic work," admiring the fineness of its "pantheistic vision"; Starzyk finds that the contradiction in the poem "represents a profound insight into the nature of the universe and man's attempt at finding permanence therein." This creation of a minister's daughter is indeed astonishing for its blunt rejection of orthodox religion—

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Some Videos

01] Emily Brontë - The Strange One - Biographical Documentary

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BLTfP1G5DTM> [26:35]

02] English Literature | Emily Brontë and her masterpiece

"Wuthering Heights"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v6UsQRGdM_4 [23:49]

The Enduring Legacy of Emily Brontë

{Ref: <https://www.numberanalytics.com/blog/emily-bronte-legacy>}

Influence on Literature

Emily Brontë's **Wuthering Heights** has left an indelible mark on the literary world. Published in 1847, the novel has influenced generations of writers, shaped literary movements, and continues to be a timeless classic in British literature. In this section, we'll explore the impact of **Wuthering Heights** on literary movements, its influence on notable authors, and its continued relevance in contemporary literature.

The Impact of Wuthering Heights on Literary Movements

Wuthering Heights was a pioneering work in the Romantic movement, characterized by its emphasis on emotion, nature, and the individual. The novel's exploration of the human experience, coupled with its vivid depiction of the Yorkshire moors, resonated with readers and writers alike. The novel's influence can be seen in the works of later Romantic writers, such as the Pre-Raphaelite poets.

The novel also played a significant role in shaping the Gothic fiction genre. The atmospheric and eerie setting of **Wuthering Heights**, combined with its themes of love, revenge, and tragedy, have become hallmarks of the genre. Authors such as Daphne du Maurier and Shirley Jackson have drawn upon Brontë's work in their own explorations of the darker aspects of human nature.

Influence on Notable Authors and Writers

Wuthering Heights has been a source of inspiration for many notable authors. The Brontë sisters' innovative storytelling and poetic prose have influenced writers across generations. Some notable examples include:

- **D.H. Lawrence:** Lawrence's novels, such as **Sons and Lovers** and **Women in Love**, owe a debt to Brontë's exploration of the human psyche and the natural world.
- **Sylvia Plath:** Plath's poetry and fiction often referenced Brontë's work, reflecting her own fascination with the themes of love, loss, and the power of nature.
- **Anne Carson:** Carson's innovative and lyrical writing style has been compared to Brontë's poetic prose. Her works, such as **The**

Beauty of the Husband, explore similar themes of love, identity, and the complexities of human relationships.

The Novel's Continued Relevance in Contemporary Literature

Despite being written over 170 years ago, *Wuthering Heights* remains a relevant and powerful work in contemporary literature. The novel's exploration of universal themes, such as love, revenge, and the human condition, continues to resonate with readers today. Contemporary authors continue to draw upon Brontë's work, reimagining and reinterpreting the novel for modern audiences.

Adaptations and Interpretations

Wuthering Heights has been adapted and reinterpreted numerous times since its initial publication. These adaptations have played a significant role in shaping the novel's cultural significance and introducing it to new audiences.

Overview of Notable Adaptations of *Wuthering Heights*

Some notable adaptations of *Wuthering Heights* include:

Year	Adaptation	Director/Creator
1939	Film	William Wyler
1970	Film	Robert Fuest
1988	Film	Yoshishige Yoshida
2011	Film	Andrea Arnold
2013	Opera	Bernard Haitink

Analysis of Different Interpretations and Reimaginings of the Novel

Adaptations of *Wuthering Heights* have taken many forms, from faithful retellings to radical reinterpretations. Some adaptations have focused on the novel's romantic elements, while others have emphasized its darker themes.

For example, the 1939 film adaptation starring Laurence Olivier and Merle Oberon emphasized the novel's romantic aspects, while the 2011 film adaptation directed by Andrea Arnold took a more nuanced approach, exploring the complexities of the characters and their relationships.

The Role of Adaptation in Shaping the Novel's Cultural Significance

Adaptations have played a crucial role in maintaining ***Wuthering Heights***' cultural relevance. By reimagining the novel for new audiences and contexts, adaptations have ensured the novel remains a living, breathing work that continues to captivate and inspire.

Cultural Significance and Relevance

Wuthering Heights has become an integral part of popular culture, with references to the novel appearing in music, film, and literature.

The Enduring Appeal of Wuthering Heights in Popular Culture

The novel's themes and characters have become part of the cultural zeitgeist. References to ***Wuthering Heights*** can be seen in:

- Music: Kate Bush's song "Wuthering Heights" (1978) was inspired by the novel, and has become a classic of British pop music.
- Film: The novel has been referenced in films such as *The Shawshank Redemption* (1994) and *The Notebook* (2004).
- Literature: Authors such as Gillian Flynn and Paula Hawkins have referenced *Wuthering Heights* in their works, drawing upon its themes and motifs.

The Novel's Continued Relevance in Contemporary Society

Wuthering Heights continues to be relevant in contemporary society, with its exploration of universal themes and complex characters remaining as pertinent today as they were when the novel was first published.

The novel's portrayal of toxic relationships, mental health, and the complexities of human emotions continues to resonate with readers. The novel's exploration of the natural world and the interconnectedness of human experience and the environment is also increasingly relevant in the context of climate change and environmental degradation.

The Ways in Which *Wuthering Heights* Continues to Inspire New Works and Adaptations

Wuthering Heights continues to inspire new works and adaptations across a range of media. The novel's timeless themes and complex characters ensure that it remains a rich source of inspiration for artists, writers, and filmmakers.

As we look to the future, it's clear that ***Wuthering Heights*** will continue to be a vital and enduring part of our cultural landscape.

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(01) <https://www.librarything.com/topic/319051>

Folio Archives 161: Wuthering Heights by Emily Brontë 1991

- (02) <chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://core.ac.uk/download/78543953.pdf>
- (03) <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/display/document/obo-9780199799558/obo-9780199799558-0009.xml>
- (04) <https://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/bronte-emily-title-commentary>
- (05) <https://www.annebronte.org/2017/05/21/patrick-bronte-poet-novelist-and-influence/>
- (06) <https://www.editoreric.com/greatlit/authors/BronteE.html>
- (07) <https://daily.jstor.org/emily-brontes-lost-second-novel/>
- (08) <https://literarydevices.net/emily-bronte-2/>
- (09) https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-1-349-20401-4_9
- (10) chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://ijels.com/upload_document/issue_files/48IJELS-110201930-Howis.pdf

Adaptations of '*Wuthering Heights*'

{**Ref:** https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adaptations_of_Wuthering_Heights}

This is a list of adaptations of *Wuthering Heights*, which was Emily Brontë's only novel. It was first published in 1847 under the pseudonym Ellis Bell, and a posthumous second edition was edited by her sister Charlotte and published in 1850.

Film

- [*Wuthering Heights*](#) (1920), a silent film and the earliest film adaptation. It was filmed in England, directed by [A.V. Bramble](#). It is unknown if any prints still exist.
- [*Wuthering Heights*](#) (1939), starring [Merle Oberon](#) as Catherine Earnshaw Linton, [Laurence Olivier](#) as [Heathcliff](#), [David Niven](#) as Edgar Linton, [Flora Robson](#) as Ellen Dean, [Donald Crisp](#) as Dr. Kenneth, [Geraldine Fitzgerald](#) as Isabella Linton and [Leo G. Carroll](#) as the recalcitrant servant Joseph. The film was adapted by [Charles MacArthur](#), [Ben Hecht](#) and [John Huston](#). It was directed by [William Wyler](#), in black and white. This adaptation, like many others, eliminated the second generation's story (young Cathy, Linton and Hareton). It won the [New York Film Critics Circle Award](#) for Best Film and was nominated for the [Academy Award for Best Picture](#).
- [*Abismos de Pasión*](#) (1954), a Spanish-language adaptation filmed in Mexico by [Luis Buñuel](#), starring [Jorge Mistral](#) and [Irasema Dilián](#).^[1]
- [*Arzoo*](#), a 1950 Indian [Hindi](#)-language romantic drama film by [Shaheed Latif](#) loosely based on the novel - starring [Dilip Kumar](#) and [Kamini Kaushal](#) in the roles of Heathcliff and Catherine respectively.
- [*Hulchul*](#), a 1951 Indian Hindi-language drama film adaptation by [S. K. Ojha](#). The film stars Dilip Kumar, [Nargis](#) and [K. N. Singh](#) in indigenized versions of Heathcliff, Catherine and Hindley.
- [*Dil Diya Dard Liya*](#) (1966), a Bollywood movie starring Dilip Kumar (Heathcliff), [Waheeda Rehman](#) (Cathy), [Pran](#) (Hindley), [Rehman](#) (Edgar) and [Shyama](#) (Isabella). Names, locations and many plot developments were adapted to suit Indian audiences.

- [*Wuthering Heights*](#) (1970), directed by [Robert Fuest](#), starring [Timothy Dalton](#) as Heathcliff and [Anna Calder-Marshall](#) as Catherine (the elder). It does not cover the whole story.
- [*Hurlevent*](#) (1985), a French film adaptation by [Jacques Rivette](#), starring [Lucas Belvaux](#) and Fabienne Babe.^[2]
- [*Onimaru*](#) (Arashi ga oka) (1988), a Japanese film by [Yoshishige Yoshida](#), starring [Yusaku Matsuda](#) and [Yuko Tanaka](#).^[3]
- [*Hihintayin Kita sa Langit*](#) (1991), a Filipino film by Carlos Siguon-Reyna, screenplay by Raquel Villavicencio, starring [Richard Gomez](#) and [Dawn Zulueta](#).
- [*Emily Brontë's Wuthering Heights*](#) (1992), directed by [Peter Kosminsky](#), starring [Juliette Binoche](#) as both Catherine Earnshaw and her daughter, and [Ralph Fiennes](#) as Heathcliff.
- [*The Promise*](#) (2007), a Filipino film by [Mike Tuviera](#), screenplay by Raquel Villavicencio, starring [Richard Gutierrez](#) and [Angel Locsin](#).
- [*Wuthering Heights*](#) (2011), a film version directed by [Andrea Arnold](#), starring [Kaya Scodelario](#) as Catherine and James Howson as Heathcliff.^[4]
- [*Wuthering Heights*](#) (2022), a film version directed by Bryan Ferriter, starring Jet Jandreau as Catherine and Bryan Ferriter as Heathcliff.^[5]
- [*Wuthering Heights*](#) (2026), directed by [Emerald Fennell](#), starring [Margot Robbie](#) and [Jacob Elordi](#).^{[6][7][8]}

TV films

- [*Wuthering Heights*](#) (1948), a BBC TV adaptation directed by an uncredited George More O'Ferrall and starring [Kieron Moore](#) and [Katharine Blake](#).^[9]
- [*Wuthering Heights*](#)^[10] (1950), a [CBS](#) television film starring [Charlton Heston](#), part of the [Studio One](#) series.^[11]
- [*Wuthering Heights*](#) (1953), a [BBC Television](#) adaptation scripted by [Nigel Kneale](#), directed by [Rudolph Cartier](#) and starred [Richard Todd](#) as Heathcliff and [Yvonne Mitchell](#) as Catherine. This version does not survive in the BBC archives. According to Kneale, it was made simply because Todd had turned up at the BBC one day and said that he wanted to play Heathcliff for them; Kneale was forced to write the script in only a week as the adaptation was rushed into production.^[12] Kneale's adaptation concentrates on the first half of the novel, removing the second generation of Earnshaws and Lintons entirely. It is unknown if a recording of the play existed, and if it did, it is not known to have survived.

- "Wuthering Heights" (1958), an episode of the [CBS](#) series [DuPont Show of the Month](#), starring [Rosemary Harris](#) as Cathy, [Richard Burton](#) as Heathcliff, and [Patty Duke](#) as young Cathy. This long-lost version was found in 2019 by Jane Klain, the research manager at the [Paley Center for Media](#). The only kinescope made of the broadcast was found among the archives of the late television historian J. Fred MacDonald that had recently been acquired by the [Library of Congress](#). [TCM](#) aired the program for the first time since its 1958 broadcast on 6 December 2019.^[13]
- [Wuthering Heights](#) (1959), an Australian adaptation aired on [ABC](#), using Nigel Kneale's script.^[14] Broadcast live in Sydney, a [kinescope](#) was made of the broadcast and shown in Melbourne at a later date. It is not known if the kinescope recording still exists.
- *Wuthering Heights* (1962), a BBC production that again used the Kneale screenplay. This was again produced by Rudolph Cartier and has been preserved in the archives. [Claire Bloom](#) played Catherine and [Keith Michell](#) played Heathcliff.^[15] This production has survived, although it is not available to the public.
- [Wuthering Heights](#) (1998), an adaptation by [Neil McKay](#) for [London Weekend Television](#) directed by [David Skynner](#) and starring [Sarah Smart](#) as Catherine (the younger), [Orla Brady](#) as the elder Catherine and [Robert Cavanah](#) as Heathcliff.^[16] Also broadcast by [PBS](#) television as part of [Masterpiece Theatre](#).
- [Wuthering Heights](#) (2003), a modern-day film adaptation that aired on [MTV](#). It stars [Erika Christensen](#), [Mike Vogel](#), and [Christopher Masterson](#).^[17]
- *Cime tempestose*^[18] (2004), an Italian television adaptation directed by [Fabrizio Costa](#), starring Alessio Boni and Anita Caprioli.
- [Wuthering High School](#) (2015), a TV film set in modern-day Malibu.^[19]

Series

- [Cumbres Borrascosas](#) (1964), a Mexican [telenovela](#).
- [Wuthering Heights](#) (1967), a BBC miniseries starring [Ian McShane](#) as Heathcliff and [Angela Scoular](#) as Cathy.
- [Wuthering Heights](#) (1978), another BBC adaptation, directed by [Peter J. Hammond](#) and produced by [Jonathan Powell](#), with screenplays by [Hugh Leonard](#) and [David Snodin](#). [Ken Hutchison](#) played Heathcliff and [Kay Adshead](#) played Cathy.

This adaptation covers the whole story, and has been reissued on DVD.

- [Cumbres Borrascosas](#) (1976), a Venezuelan telenovela.
- [Cumbres Borrascosas](#) (1979), a Mexican telenovela.
- [Sparkhouse](#) (2002), a BBC three-part series that shows a modern take on the story with the gender roles reversed, adapted by [Sally Wainwright](#), directed by [Robin Shepperd](#) and starring [Sarah Smart](#) and [Joseph McFadden](#).
- [Wuthering Heights](#) (2009), an [ITV](#) two-part series,^[20] first broadcast on [PBS](#) as part of its *Masterpiece Classic* programming and broadcast later in the year on [ITV1](#) and [STV](#), starring [Tom Hardy](#) as [Heathcliff](#) and [Charlotte Riley](#) as [Catherine](#).
- [The World Between Us](#)^[21] (2021), a Philippine series that shows a modern take on the story.

Radio and audio

- *Wuthering Heights* (17 October 1941), radio drama featured on [Philip Morris Playhouse](#), starring [Raymond Massey](#) and [Sylvia Sidney](#).^[22]
- *Wuthering Heights* (25 February 1946), radio drama featured on [Screen Guild Players](#), starring Merle Oberon, [Cornel Wilde](#) and [Reed Hadley](#).^[23]
- *Wuthering Heights* (1949), radio drama featured on [Lux Radio Theater](#), starring [Barbara Stanwyck](#) and [Ida Lupino](#).
- *Wuthering Heights* (1951), radio drama featured on [Screen Director's Playhouse](#), starring [Dorothy McGuire](#) and [James Mason](#).
- *Wuthering Heights* (1977), radio drama adapted by Elizabeth Pennell for the [CBS Radio Mystery Theater](#), featuring [Paul Hecht](#) as Heathcliff, and [Roberta Maxwell](#) as Cathy.
- *Wuthering Heights* (1979), a spoken word album featuring [Judith Anderson](#), [Claire Bloom](#), [James Mason](#), [George Rose](#), and [Gordon Gould](#). It was nominated for the [Grammy Award for Best Spoken Word Album](#).
- *The Ghost of Wuthering Heights* (2000), a drama from the [Radio Tales](#) series, which adapted the ghost story elements of the novel for [National Public Radio](#) and [XM Satellite Radio](#).
- *Wuthering Heights* (2008), an album with songs written and sung by [Mark Ryan](#), with narration by [Ray Winstone](#). Ryan also directed the music video for the song "Women", filmed especially for the website and featuring [Jennifer Korbee](#), Jessica Keenan Wynn and Katie Boerk.

Opera

- [*Wuthering Heights*](#) (1951), an opera by [Bernard Herrmann](#), which he wrote between 1943 and 1951. The [libretto](#) was by screenwriter [Lucille Fletcher](#), who was Herrmann's wife when he started writing the opera, but was no longer his wife by the time he finished. The opera was recorded in full in London in 1966, with the composer conducting the [Pro Arte Orchestra](#). It featured the [soprano Morag Beaton](#) in the role of Cathy, and [baritone Donald Bell](#) as Heathcliff. The recording was re-released in 1972 by [Unicorn-Kanchana](#) records, and later transferred to CD. However, the opera was not produced in an operatic venue until 1982, by [Portland Opera](#) (and even this was an abridged version that omitted 30–40 minutes of the music and changed the ending).^{[24][25]} [Renée Fleming](#) recorded the aria "I have dreamt" in 1998.^[26]
- [*Wuthering Heights*](#) (1958), an opera by [Carlisle Floyd](#), which premiered at the [Santa Fe Opera](#) with [Phyllis Curtin](#) as Catherine Earnshaw and [Robert Trehay](#) as Heathcliff. A revised version of the work was performed the following year at the [New York City Opera](#) with Curtin, [Patricia Neway](#), and [Richard Cassilly](#).
- The all-female Japanese opera company, [Takarazuka Revue](#), has their own interpretation of the story; the musical drama was first performed in the 1970s and the most recent production was in 1998, starring [Yōka Wao](#).

Musical theatre

- [*Wuthering Heights*](#) (1994), a musical by [Bernard J. Taylor](#). It was first recorded in 1992 as a [concept album](#) starring [Lesley Garrett](#), [Dave Willetts](#), [Bonnie Langford](#) and Clive Carter. It has been translated into German, Romanian and Polish.^[27]
- [*Heathcliff*](#) (1996), a musical starring, and commissioned by, [Cliff Richard](#). Not well received by many older fans of the singer, it portrayed the very brutal side of the character. The album of the libretto was recorded by Richard and [Olivia Newton-John](#).

Other theatre

- *Heights* (1992) by Vince Foxall, La Mama Theatre, Melbourne, Australia
- A theatrical adaptation by [Michael Napier Brown](#) was performed at the [Royal Theatre](#) in [Northampton](#) in 1994.
- A 1996 adaptation by [Gillian Hiscott](#) for theatre, toured theatres in Northern UK and the Midlands, published by Cressrelles.^[28]

- *Wuthering Heights* (2001), a ballet score by [Claude-Michel Schönberg](#). This production was performed by the United Kingdom's Northern Ballet Theatre Company in September 2002. A 2-CD soundtrack was released under the First Night label in 2004.
- A theatrical adaptation conceived and directed by [Emma Rice](#) played the [National Theatre](#) in 2022, followed by an international tour.

Graphic novel

- A [graphic novel](#) was published by [Classical Comics](#) in 2011. The story was adapted by Sean M. Wilson, with painted artwork by [John M. Burns](#).

Loose adaptations

- The parody sketch "The [Semaphore](#) Version of Wuthering Heights", in the episode *The Spanish Inquisition* ([season 2, episode 2](#)) of *Monty Python's Flying Circus*, September 1970.
- The gothic soap opera [Dark Shadows](#) used the story as inspiration for its final storyline, episodes 1186 to 1245, in 1971.
- [The Promise](#) (2007), a Filipino film starring [Richard Gutierrez](#) and [Angel Locsin](#) which loosely remakes *Hihintayin Kita sa Langit* which in turn was a loose adaption of *Wuthering Heights*.
- [Walang Hanggan](#) (*International Title: "My Eternal"*) (2012), a Filipino TV drama on [ABS-CBN](#) loosely based on the 1991 film *Hihintayin Kita sa Langit*, which itself was loosely based on *Wuthering Heights*.
- [Limbus Company](#) features [Heathcliff](#) as one of the 12 playable "sinners". Canto VI is a loose adaptation of various elements of *Wuthering Heights*.

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Emily Brontë's Handwritten Poems

Collection of rare books and manuscripts first assembled by
Charlotte Brontë's widower has been out of
public view for nearly a century.

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An "incredibly rare" handwritten manuscript of Emily Brontë's poems, with pencil corrections by her sister Charlotte, is going up for auction as part of a "lost library" that has been out of public view for nearly a century.

The collection was put together by Arthur Bell Nicholls, the widower of Charlotte, who of the six Brontë children lived the longest, dying in 1855 at the age of 38. Nicholls sold the majority of the surviving Brontë manuscripts in 1895 to the notorious bibliophile and literary forger Thomas James Wise. The collectors and brothers Alfred and William Law, who grew up 20 miles from the Brontë family home in Haworth, then acquired some of the family's heirlooms from Wise, including the manuscript of Emily's poems, and the family's much-annotated copy of *A History of British Birds*, a book immortalised in *Jane Eyre*.

The Law brothers' library at Honresfield House disappeared from public view when their nephew and heir Alfred Law died in 1939, and was inaccessible even to academics.

"In the last 90 years, only one or two (very discreet) scholars have had access to slivers of the material, so essentially, only two people alive have seen any of it," said a spokesperson for Sotheby's, which is handling the auction of more than 500 manuscripts, first editions and letters from the Honresfield library in July.

Sotheby's described the manuscript of 29 poems by Emily as "incredibly rare", valuing it at between £800,000 and £1.2m. "It is the most important manuscript by Emily to come to market in a lifetime, and by far the most significant such manuscript to remain in private hands," said the auction house. "Almost nothing of Emily's survived – she essentially wrote Wuthering Heights and then parted the world without a trace. There aren't even really any letters out there by her, as she had no one to correspond with."

It is the only surviving handwritten manuscript to feature some of Emily's most famous poems, including No Coward Soul Is Mine, The Bluebell, and The Old Stoic, and was mentioned by Charlotte in her 1850 preface to Wuthering Heights, when she noted how she "accidentally lighted on a MS volume of verse in my sister Emily's handwriting."

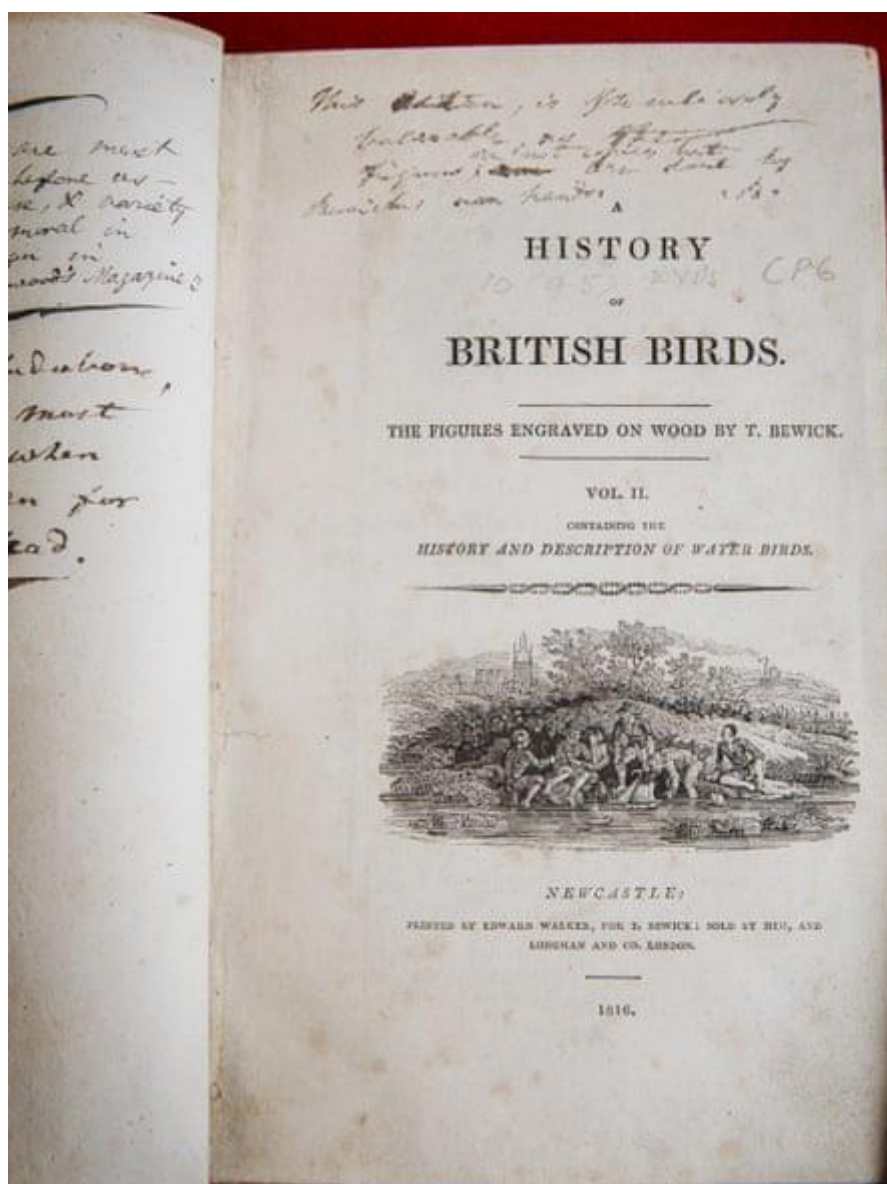
"I looked it over, and something more than surprise seized me – a deep conviction that these were not common effusions, nor at all like poetry women generally write," wrote Charlotte. "I thought them condensed and terse, vigorous and genuine. To my ear, they had also a peculiar music – melancholy, and elevating."

Dr Gabriel Heaton, Sotheby's English literature and historical manuscripts specialist, said: "With the Brontës, our love of their work is very much bound up with our interest in their lives. These manuscripts bring you a sense of their creativity, very much within the context of their existence, which is just wonderful. I work with literary manuscripts all the time, and Emily Brontë is not someone you ever expect to see because so little of her manuscripts survive. So, to have something like this is just electrifying."

[Kindly visit these Web Links:](#)

<https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-57242780>

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2021/may/25/emily-brontes-handwritten-poems-are-highlight-of-lost-library-auction>



Brontë family copy of Thomas Bewick's *A History of British Birds*.

Also in the Honresfield library, which has been cared for by generations of the Law family, is the Brontë family's copy of Thomas Bewick's *A History of British Birds*. Extensive annotations made by their father Rev Patrick Brontë give an insight into family life in Haworth, from his personal observations – of the golden eagle, he notes that "I saw, in Leeds, a stuffed specimen of this bird; it was considerably larger than a goose, as its neck was as thick as a man's arm" – to culinary notes. "The use of peacocks for food is not forbidden in the Law of Moses," he writes, although the starling is "coarse and

unpalatable" and "all the Grebes are fishy tasted, and very bad eating and so are all birds, that live on fish".

The book is mentioned by Charlotte in *Jane Eyre*, when the young heroine is depicted sinking into a copy, imagining the "death-white realms" of the Arctic, "shadowy, like all the half-comprehended notions that float dim through children's brains, but strangely impressive". The family copy, complete with a pencil sketch by one of the Brontë children, will be auctioned with a guide price of £30,000 to £50,000.

As well as a collection of notes passed between Anne and Emily, including a little sketch of them writing at a table, Sotheby's will also auction a letter from Charlotte to her publisher George Smith, in which she discusses reviews of *Jane Eyre* as well as speculation on the identity of the Bells – the pseudonyms used by the sisters.

Brother Branwell's literary ambitions, meanwhile, are revealed in a letter to Hartley Coleridge, son of poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge. "Since my childhood, I have been wont to devote the hours I could spare from other and very different employments, to efforts at literary composition," Branwell writes, adding that while he is about to "enter active life", he loves writing "too well to fling aside the practise of it without an effort to ascertain whether I could turn it to account, not in *wholly* maintaining my self but in *aiding* my maintenance." His literary ambitions would not be realised.

The lots, which also include manuscripts from Robert Burns and Walter Scott, will be offered across three auctions at Sotheby's, starting in July, with exhibitions of the literary items planned in London, New York and Edinburgh.

"The collection as a whole paint a unique portrait of the passions of one of the greatest and least-known collecting families from a golden age of book collecting," said Heaton. "When the library went missing from public view in the 1930s, many assumed it had disappeared, and to now play a role in bringing it to a wider audience is a true career highlight."

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The Complete Poems of Emily Brontë

{Ref:

[https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The Complete Poems of Emily Bront%C3%AB](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Complete_Poems_of_Emily_Bront%C3%AB)}

THE
COMPLETE POEMS
OF
EMILY BRONTË

EDITED BY

[CLEMENT SHORTER](#)

WITH INTRODUCTORY ESSAY
BY

[W. ROBERTSON NICOLL](#)

HODDER AND STOUGHTON

NEW YORK AND LONDON

A BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

The admirer of Emily Brontë and her work has known her poetry up to the present through only some thirty-nine poems. There were twenty-two poems in the little volume entitled Poems by Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell, which was the first venture of the three Miss Brontës, and there were yet another seventeen in the Posthumous Poems that Charlotte Brontë printed after Emily's death. These thirty-nine poems have been reprinted many times, usually at the end of The Professor. No less than one hundred and thirty-eight additional poems are included in the present volume. Although it cannot be pretended that any one of these is equal to 'The Old Stoic,' that gave so much distinction to the first volume, or to the 'Last Lines,' that were the unforgettable glory of the second, it will scarcely be disputed that these newly printed verses are of profound interest.

There is no incident in the profoundly pathetic story of the Brontës better known than that of the publication of the poems by the three sisters through the firm of Aylott and Jones of Paternoster Row. The little book bears the date 1846. Charlotte, Emily, and Anne Brontë here courted public favour for the first time. Only two copies were sold, as we learn from a letter that Currer Bell sent to certain eminent contemporaries—to Tennyson, to Lockhart, to De Quincey, and to others. Here is the letter in question:—

June 16th, 1847.

SIR,—My relatives, Ellis and Acton Bell, and myself, heedless of the repeated warnings of various respectable publishers, have committed the rash act of printing a volume of poems.

The consequences predicted have, of course, overtaken us: our book is found to be a drug; no man needs it or heeds it. In the space of a year our publisher has disposed but of two copies, and by what painful efforts he succeeded in getting rid of these two, himself only knows.

Before transferring the edition to the trunkmakers, we have decided on distributing as presents a few copies of what we cannot sell; and we beg to offer you one in acknowledgment of the pleasure and profit we have often and long derived from your works.—I am, sir, yours very respectfully,

CURRER BELL.

It is a curious irony of circumstance that this little volume, which so failed of recognition when that would have heartened its authors beyond measure, now sells, on the rare occasions that it turns up in the sale-rooms, for more money than the whole issue cost Charlotte Brontë and her sisters when they had it published at their own expense.

The additional poems which form, as may be seen, the larger part of this volume (pp. 85-333) were contained in note-books that Charlotte Brontë had handled tenderly when she made her Selection after Emily and Anne had died. These little note-books were lent to me by Mr. Nicholls, her husband, some forty years afterwards, with permission to publish whatever I liked from them. No one to-day will deny to them a certain bibliographical interest.

CLEMENT SHORTER.

April 24th, 1908.

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**Kindly visit the cited Web Link to read/reach
all the poems – running into 330 pages**

Happy 199th Birthday Emily Brontë

{<https://www.annebronte.org/2017/07/30/happy-199th-birthday-emily-bronte/>}

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199 years ago today, a very special girl was born in the parish of Thornton near Bradford. She was the fifth child of the parish priest and his Cornish wife, and as they looked down on their new baby they could little have guessed the impact she would have on the world of literature. She was no ordinary baby, she was Emily Jane Brontë.

When you think of the impact that she has made on readers it's astonishing to think that Emily Brontë wrote just one novel, the supremely powerful Wuthering Heights before being struck down by tuberculosis aged just thirty. Less than two years after Emily's own birth she gained a younger sister in the form of Anne Brontë and just a few months later the family would move to a new parish, the nearby village of Haworth.



Heathcliff, Cathy and the moors – three protagonists of Wuthering Heights

Emily lost her mother Maria when she was just three years old. She and Anne being the youngest in the

family, they clung to each other for comfort and support throughout their childhood and into their adult lives. Both girls were extremely shy, often hugging each other for comfort when in the company of strangers and hiding away together, and they shared many of the same interests: from walking the moors, to playing the piano, from looking after their ever expanding collection of pets to reading the exciting adventure stories of Walter Scott.

As Emily and Anne grew up together their love for each other strengthened, and became almost twin like. Family friend Ellen Nussey saw this first hand, and as well as noting how they walked with their arms entwined with each others whenever possible, she said: "She and Anne were like twins – inseparable companions, and in the very closest sympathy, which never had any interruption."



Emily Brontë with Anne in To Walk Invisible

It was Ellen who also gave us a description of the teenage Emily: "Emily had by this time acquired a lithesome, graceful figure. She was the tallest person in the house, except her father. Her hair, which was naturally as beautiful as Charlotte's, was in the same unbecoming tight curl and frizz, and there was the same want of complexion. She had very beautiful eyes, kind, kindling, liquid eyes; but she did not often look at you: she was too reserved. She talked very little."

Emily was by far the tallest of the Brontë sisters, and was generally of strong and robust health as well, and yet she couldn't master her shyness. When she went to Roe Head school, where her sister Charlotte was teaching, she became so homesick that she had to be sent home for fear of her life itself, as Charlotte relates: "Every morning when she woke the vision of home and the moors rushed on her, and darkened and saddened the day that lay before her. Nobody knew what ailed her but me – I knew only too well. In this struggle her health was quickly broken: her white face, attenuated form, and failing strength threatened rapid decline. I felt in my heart she would die, if she did not go home."



Roe Head school, Mirfield, today – briefly attended by Emily Bronte

It was Anne who took Emily's place, although also suffering from shyness throughout her life she mastered it in a way that her elder sister never could. As children Emily and Anne wrote a vast array of poetry and prose about their imagined kingdom of Gondal, and soon the lines between Gondal reality and Haworth reality became blurred for Emily. She retreated further and further into her world of make belief, and was never happier than when alone on the moors – occasions that took on a spiritual and mystical aspect for her.

It was Emily's poetry that was responsible for the wonderful work of the Brontë sisters that we know and love today. It was well known to her sisters that Emily still wrote Gondal poetry, but she also had a secret book in which she wrote non-Gondal poetry. When Charlotte 'accidentally' discovered this book the course of literary history was changed forever:

"One day, in the autumn of 1845, I accidentally lighted on a manuscript volume of verse in my sister Emily's handwriting. Of course, I was not surprised, knowing that she could and did write verse: I looked it over, and something more than surprise seized me, – a deep conviction that these were not common effusions, nor at all like the poetry women generally write. I thought them condensed and terse, vigorous and genuine. To my ear, they also had a peculiar music – wild, melancholy, and elevating."

A terrible argument ensued as Charlotte tried to persuade Emily to have her poetry published, but her reserve was finally defeated when Anne and Charlotte agreed to contribute their poems as well. The result was 'Poems by Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell'. It sold only two copies, but the sisters had now got the writing bug and decided that for their next venture they would each attempt a prose volume that they could have published jointly. Charlotte's contribution, 'The Professor', was rejected but Emily's 'Wuthering Heights' and Anne's 'Agnes Grey' were published together by Thomas Cautley Newby & Co in 1847.

Emily was disdainful of literary success, and of the criticism that her novel received. It was as if she had lain pearls before swine, and she would not make that mistake again. The publication of 'Wuthering Heights' marked the end of Emily's writing life completely, with just one poem written subsequent to it; her prodigious output of poetry is amongst the best written in the English language, and often has a visionary quality that

reveals to us the inner world Emily was living in. Outwardly calm and quiet, by the candlelight of night she would be visited by incredible and elating visions that would power and inform her writing.



The portrait I bought at Haworth, 1989 – is it Emily Brontë or Anne?

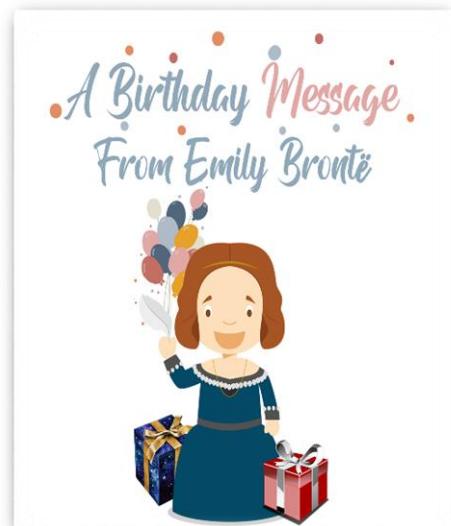
I personally have a lot to be thankful to Emily for. 'Wuthering Heights' was the first novel on my reading list at University, and within a few sentences I was hooked. My love of the Brontës was formed, and it has brought untold joy into my life ever since. That very weekend I made my first journey to the Brontë Parsonage Museum at Haworth and bought a portrait claimed to be of Emily Brontë (although I now feel that it is actually of Anne); it hung on my wall as a student for three years.

Next year will be a very special year indeed as we mark the 200th anniversary of Emily's birth, and I'm proud that my biography of Emily will be released to mark the occasion. For now, we can all celebrate by reading some of Emily's poetry, her astonishing novel, or watching a film version of 'Wuthering Heights' as we say 'Happy 199th Birthday, Emily Brontë'!

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The Making of Emily Brontë

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/the-making-of-emily-bronte-180981637/>

A new film imagines the events that inspired the notoriously private author to write "*Wuthering Heights*"



Michelle Mehrstens - Arts and Culture Correspondent
February 16, 2023



Emma Mackey as Emily Brontë in *Emily*, a new film from Frances O'Connor

In December 1847, Emily Brontë's only published novel, *Wuthering Heights*, hurtled onto England's literary scene, shocking the public and critics alike with its graphic depictions of violence and psychological abuse.

A reviewer from *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper* proclaimed, "The reader is ... disgusted, almost sickened by details of cruelty, inhumanity, and the most diabolical hate and vengeance." Another critic wrote, "There is not in the entire *dramatis persona* a single character which is not utterly hateful or thoroughly contemptible."

One word in particular dominated these critiques: "coarse." Still, beneath this vitriol, a grudging admiration for the novel's sheer power was

apparent. As the *Douglas Jerrold's* reviewer noted, "It is impossible to begin and not finish it; and quite as impossible to lay it aside afterwards and say nothing about it."

More than 175 years after its publication, *Wuthering Heights* is a beloved literary classic. Yet the woman behind the book remains elusive, the details of her short life (she died in 1848 at age 30) shrouded in inscrutability.

Emily, a new film from actress and director Frances O'Connor, attempts to unravel some of these mysteries by exploring the events that inspired its titular character to write *Wuthering Heights*. A reclusive young woman, the fictionalized Emily (played by Emma Mackey of "Sex Education") struggles to find her footing both within and beyond her family. While her sisters, Charlotte (Alexandra Dowling) and Anne (Amelia Gething), accept teaching positions outside of the home, Emily and their brother, Branwell (Fionn Whitehead), are left behind. Soon, Emily begins taking French lessons from her father's assistant curate, the serious-minded William Weightman (Oliver Jackson-Cohen). The pair's secret romance blossoms into an encounter both thrilling and tragic.

Is Emily based on a true story?

Arriving in theaters in the United States on Friday, February 17, *Emily* merges the drama of *Wuthering Heights* with shades of biographical truth. As *IndieWire* critic David Ehrlich writes, "Invented splashes of rebellion and romance only add to the ecstatic truth that *Emily* brings to its windswept tale of a stultified woman survived by her inner strength."



Emma Mackey as Emily Brontë

O'Connor, who wrote and directed the film, read *Wuthering Heights* when she was 15 and instantly fell in love with it. Drawn to the rebellious nature

of the characters, she appreciated that Emily herself was “a quiet rebel in a lot of ways.” While acknowledging that the movie’s blend of fact and fiction may seem “deliberately provocative” (the relationship with Weightman is particularly ahistorical), O’Connor says she hopes her protagonist’s indomitable spirit resonates with viewers.

“I’m letting her have moments that are very truthfully biographical and moments that are kind of heightened and from my imagination, from my research,” O’Connor adds. “I love that, and I think Emily would love that, because it’s an active creative process, and that’s something she really believed in. You can feel that when you read her book. ... She creates this gorgeous, Gothic, dark world, where people are violent and angry and in love and have deep emotions, and that’s very alive. And I wanted to have that same feeling in the film for the audience.”

Humble beginnings

Born in 1818, Emily was the daughter of Irish clergyman Patrick Brontë and his English wife, Maria Branwell. The fifth of six children, she spent her childhood in Haworth, a village where Patrick served as the resident parish priest.

Emily’s youth was marked by a series of tragedies. When she was 3, her mother died of cancer. A few years later, her two eldest sisters, Maria and Elizabeth, died of tuberculosis, an illness likely linked to the harsh, unsanitary living conditions they experienced at the Clergy Daughters’ School at Cowan Bridge. Emily and her older sister Charlotte, who later based the Lowood School in *Jane Eyre* on Cowan Bridge, left the boarding school after Maria’s death in May 1825 and returned to Haworth, where they spent much of their time in the company of their surviving siblings, Branwell and Anne.

Lucasta Miller, author of *The Brontë Myth*, says the Brontë children grew up isolated in part because of Haworth’s impoverished status. “There weren’t many other families of the Brontës’ social position with whom they could socialize,” she explains.

To combat the bleakness of their early childhood, the four siblings encouraged each other’s creative ventures, crafting stories, poems and art. Charlotte and Branwell invented a mystical realm called Angria, while Emily and Anne wrote intricate tales about an imaginary land known as Gondal.

During this time, the Brontës were deeply influenced by Romanticism and its celebrated writers, including Walter Scott, Percy Shelley and William Wordsworth. Deborah Morse, a literary scholar at the College of William and Mary and a co-editor of *A Companion to the Brontës*, says, “They loved

the poets, both that literary movement and the impulse of that movement toward freedom, liberation [and] non-hierarchical thinking.”

A battle of wills

In the film, a prickly tension exists between Emily and Charlotte, who urges her younger sister to embrace proper feminine behavior. Unwilling to do so, Emily dashes across Haworth with loose hair and immerses herself in the fantastical realm of Gondal. Later, Charlotte chastises Emily for continuing to engage in childish fantasies, telling her not to “speak like that.” She also pushes Emily to become a teacher rather than remain idle at home. Here, two archetypes emerge: Charlotte is the prim, practical older sibling, trying to corral Emily into ladylike behavior. Emily is the wild one, frustrated by her sister’s unsolicited counseling and mundane daily routine.

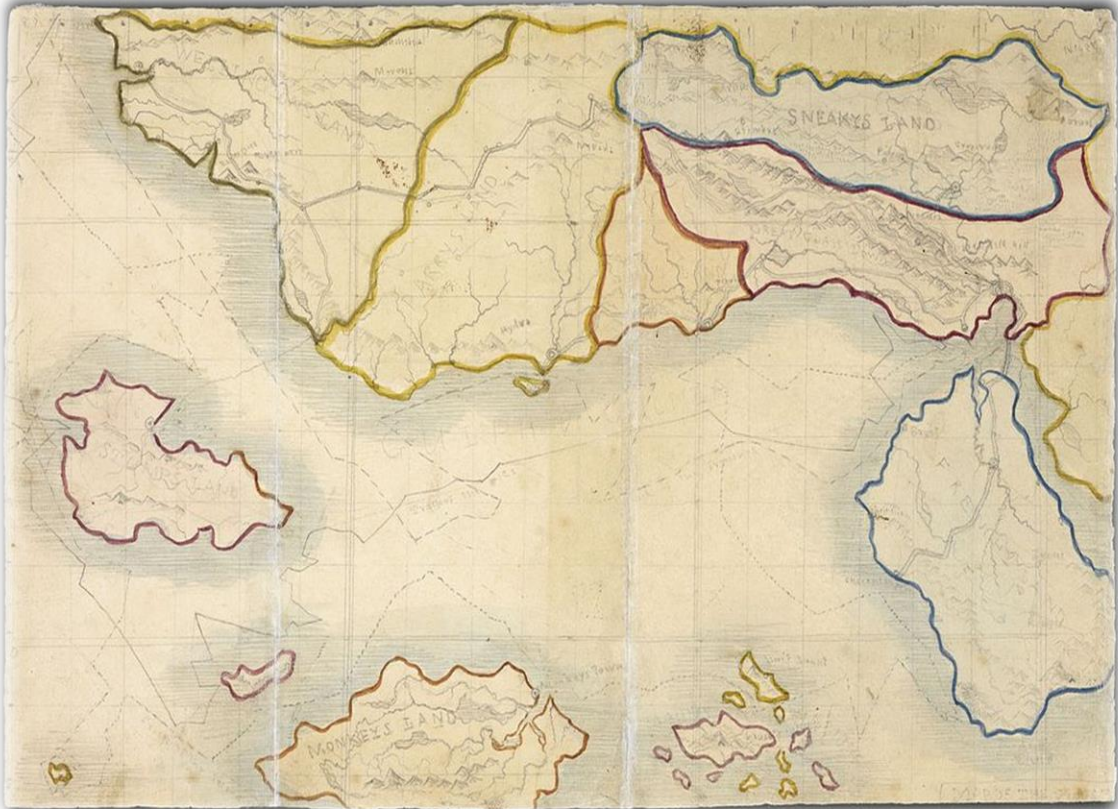
The pair’s real-life relationship was a nuanced, complex sisterhood. While both Emily and Charlotte studied in Brussels in 1842, it was Charlotte who consistently sought experiences beyond Haworth, working as a teacher at Roe Head and later traveling as a governess. Emily, comparatively, struggled with anxiety and illness, seeking respite in the familiar confines of her small town.

While Charlotte left Angria behind to make way for a version of herself that better fit her reality, Emily never stopped believing in Gondal. During her brief tenure as a student at Roe Head in 1835, Emily became so homesick that she had to return to Haworth.

“Charlotte excuses this by saying that she misses the moors,” says Juliet Barker, author of *The Brontës*. “It’s quite obvious when you look at what’s left of Emily’s writings, it wasn’t the moors she missed. It was her Gondal and the imaginary world she’d created.”

Emily remained tethered to Gondal into adulthood. The boundaries between her daily life and her imagination were seemingly porous. As Barker notes, one of Emily’s surviving diary entries (many of which she wrote with Anne) lists the everyday events unfolding around her, mentioning that the family’s housemaid is in the kitchen before bluntly stating, “The Gondals are invading.”

“She swaps from one very commonplace thing that’s happening within the household to her imaginary world that she had created with Anne,” says Barker. “And for her, throughout her life, her imaginary world was as real to her as what was going on around her. And it had a more powerful hold over her and her imagination than anything else that she ever encountered.”



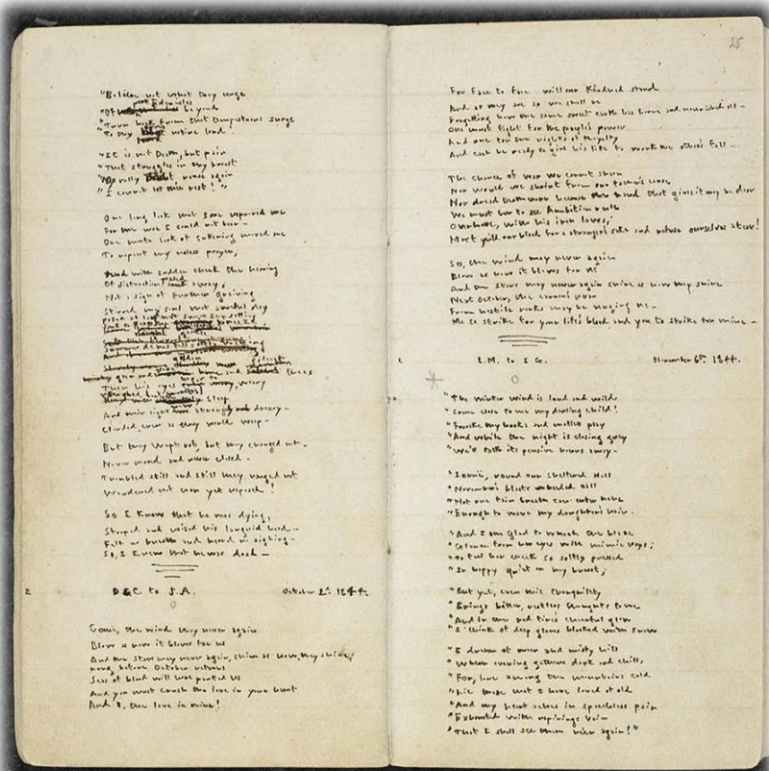
A hand-drawn map of Angria, the imaginary land created by Charlotte and Branwell

The Bell brothers

In October 1842, the Brontës' surrogate mother, their maternal aunt Elizabeth Branwell, died unexpectedly. Charlotte and Emily, who had been studying abroad in Brussels, returned home for the funeral. But while Charlotte resumed her studies in the new year, Emily remained at Haworth, taking over as manager of the household.

While the film implies that Emily resented the drudgery of housework, the real-life author enjoyed performing domestic chores.

"Being at home, being the housekeeper, having her hands busy, cooking, cleaning, doing whatever, her brain was free," says Barker. "And she was free to explore and think and do what she wanted and to create and live with these imaginary characters who dominated her life since childhood. And that, to me, is the key to Emily's character."



Manuscript of Emily's Gondal poems

Back in familiar surroundings, Emily—who reached “the peak of her poetic powers” in 1844 and 1845, according to the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography—started writing “hauntingly elegiac lyrics in a spare, natural style.” When Charlotte came across a book of Emily’s poems in 1845, she was struck by their rich language and intellect. Emily, however, was enraged that her sister had read her work without her permission; it was only after much discussion and disagreement that she agreed to publish a volume of poetry with Charlotte and Anne.

The sisters released their poetry collection in 1846, using the androgynous pseudonyms of Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell. According to Miller, the book was a total “commercial failure.” Still, the act of publication inflamed the sisters’ ambitions. A year later, Charlotte published *Jane Eyre*. Two months after its release, Anne published *Agnes Grey*, and Emily put out *Wuthering Heights*.

Emily depicts the author proudly holding a copy of *Wuthering Heights*, with her full name printed on its cover. In truth, Emily released her novel under the same pseudonym she used for her poems, and she fiercely objected to any attempts to identify her as its author.

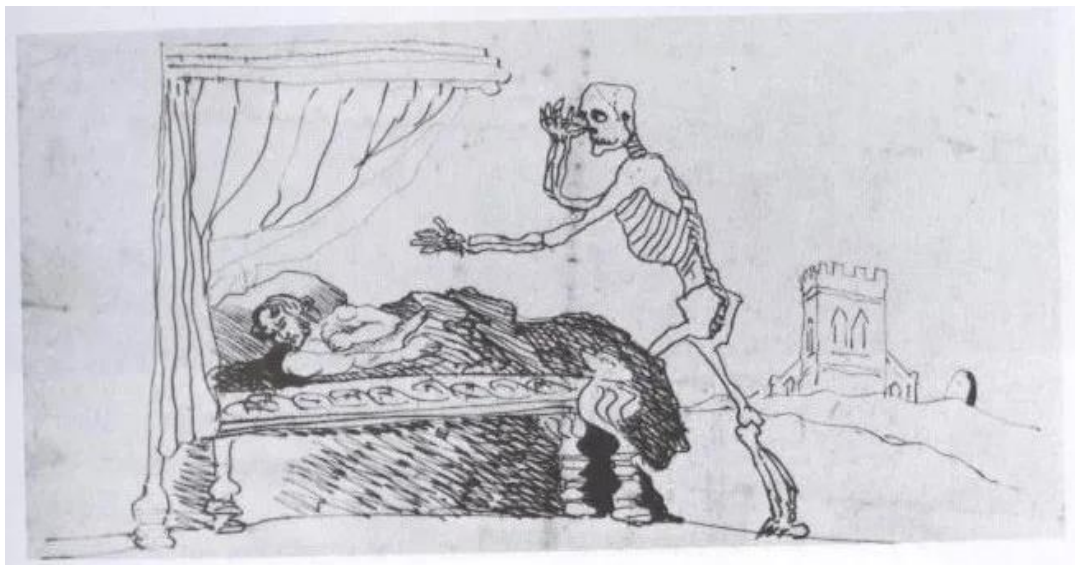
Of the sisters’ three novels, *Jane Eyre* was the most popular and well received. But Charlotte’s book was not without controversy. It, too, garnered reproach for its supposed “coarseness.”

As Miller writes in *The Brontë Myth*, “The ‘coarseness’ to which so many critics objected was a catch-all moralistic term which encompassed a range of elements considered unfeminine and indecorous.” Much of this critical disparagement rested on reviewers’ distaste that both *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre* openly portrayed romantic desire and violence—topics considered unsuitable for modest, high-class women. The vivid nature of the Brontës’ prose, as well as their use of pseudonyms, led some contemporary critics to conclude their books could only have been written by men.

By 1848, speculation over the Bell brothers’ true identities was rampant, with one persistent rumor alleging that Currer, Ellis and Acton were all the same person. That July, Charlotte and Anne traveled to London to refute the charge (Emily stayed at home), identifying themselves to Charlotte’s publisher, George Smith, for the first time.

Shortly after the sisters’ London visit, tragedy struck the Brontë family once again. Branwell died on September 24, 1848, at age 31, likely of tuberculosis exacerbated by opium addiction and alcoholism. Emily caught a cold at his funeral but refused to seek medical treatment, even as her illness deteriorated into tuberculosis. She died on December 19, just five months before her younger sister, Anne, succumbed to the same disease at age 29.

In 1849, Charlotte, the only surviving Brontë sibling, wrote a letter describing her grief: “I could hardly let Emily go—I wanted to hold her back then—and I want her back hourly now. ... Papa has now me only—the weakest—puniest—least promising of his six children—consumption has taken the whole five.”



A self-caricature of Branwell on his deathbed

Charlotte takes charge

In her writing, Charlotte challenged societal expectations of womanhood, creating a protagonist who spoke plainly about autonomy and self-respect. In public, however, she quietly tried to mold herself into an approved image of class and femininity. She wanted the artistic validation and respect of her chosen profession, but she shrank from readers' attempts to classify her as a fiery, rebellious woman author. Deeply affected by the criticism aimed at *Jane Eyre*, Charlotte sought to establish a dignified persona that undermined lingering gossip of the Brontës' incivility.

Determined to rehabilitate her sisters' posthumous reputations, Charlotte published a "Biographical Notice of Ellis and Acton Bell" in 1850. In this statement, she reworked the duo's image, emphasizing that both Emily and Anne were innocent, naive women who had been raised in an isolated region.

"Neither Emily nor Anne was learned," wrote Charlotte. "They had no thought of filling their pitchers at the well-spring of other minds; they always wrote from the impulse of nature, the dictates of intuition, and from such stores of observation as their limited experience had enabled them to amass."

This was far from an accurate representation of the Brontës' upbringing. Well-versed in and passionate about literature, particularly Romantic poetry and novels, Emily and Anne grew up in a household that nurtured their intellectual curiosity.

"Many scholars think that Charlotte was trying to protect her sisters. And that's what I believe," says Morse. "I mean, she was in mourning. She'd been traumatized repeatedly. She was trying to protect her sisters, but in protecting them, she kind of sanitized their work." As part of this publicity campaign, Charlotte suppressed the reprinting of Anne's second novel, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, and possibly destroyed the manuscript of Emily's second novel, which was mentioned in a letter from her publisher but has never been found.

Over time, readers became fascinated by the legacy—and mystery—of the Brontës. Charlotte's insistence that Emily was an inexperienced young woman who rarely left Haworth led observers to question how she could have written such a forceful, turbulent tale. As the years passed, every new narrative that cropped up about the sisters harbored a competing agenda.

Adding to the confusion was Charlotte's friend Elizabeth Gaskell, an author in her own right. Soon after Charlotte's death in 1855 at age 38, Gaskell sought to defend her companion from what she considered slanderous claims of impropriety. She threw herself into writing Charlotte's biography,

cobbling together half-truths, real-life incidents and pure fiction. While Morse “loves” Gaskell and teaches some of her books in her class, she also says that Gaskell “relied on negligent and unreliable sources.”

Repeatedly, Gaskell’s *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* underscored the hardships of the sisters’ youth. She described Haworth as a cold, unrelenting wasteland that left the young girls isolated and unworldly. She also highlighted the sins of the Brontë men, spotlighting Branwell’s affair with a married woman (true) and Patrick’s callous, domineering behavior (not true) to chart how the women of the family were unfairly influenced by their grim household. In the end, Gaskell positioned Charlotte—and, by extension, her sisters—as proper ladies dedicated to domesticity and grace above all else.

Who was Emily Brontë?

While Charlotte left behind diaries, letters and juvenilia, the majority of Emily’s writings no longer survive. “If you think of Charlotte, the hundreds, literally hundreds, of letters that she wrote, they give you a real insight into her mind and her way of thinking and what she was doing,” says Barker. “With Emily, you simply don’t have any of that.”

In attempting to draw parallels between key moments in *Wuthering Heights* and its author’s life, *Emily* perpetuates myths that have followed the Brontës for the better part of the past two centuries. Notably, two relationships serve as the film’s centerpiece: Emily’s devoted friendship with her brother, Branwell, and a fictional romance between Emily and Weightman. While some critics have interpreted the shy author and the brooding assistant curate as stand-ins for Cathy and Heathcliff, the ill-fated lovers of *Wuthering Heights*, O’Connor approached the narrative from a different angle: Her Branwell and Emily allude to the novel’s central characters, while Weightman represents Cathy’s future husband, Edgar.

Cathy’s quest to achieve independence from Heathcliff mirrors Emily’s dynamic with her brother. “[She wanted] to be released from him so she [could] individuate and become her true self,” O’Connor says, “and that’s in the book, too.” Like Gaskell and many others, the director links Branwell’s allegedly chaotic persona to the eventual construction of Emily’s magnum opus.

Simultaneously, the film similarly leans into the idea that an all-encompassing, doomed love intensely colored Emily’s creative expression.

While Weightman was a real person (and “a notorious flirt” who attracted the attention of both Anne and Charlotte, according to Barker), nothing suggests he and Emily engaged in a romantic courtship, much less a torrid

"He was a pious young man," says Miller. "I mean, [he was] really not a Byronic hero who's going up and having wild sex on the moors in an abandoned cottage."

On her deathbed, Emily asked to be taken upstairs so she could look out the window at the moors. "It still makes my heart ache," says Morse. "I'm so invested in them. ... My students are, too. They cry. The Brontë class, you know, people have to bring Kleenex."



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Reimagining how Emily Brontë died

<https://www.lboro.ac.uk/news-events/news/2022/december/reimagining-how-emily-bronte-died-new-research/>



The sofa on which Emily Brontë is said to have died.

A new interpretation of the only existing record from the time of Emily Brontë's death has offered an alternative narrative for the *Wuthering Heights* author's final moments.

The widely accepted story of how the 19th-century English novelist died comes from her sister, Charlotte, who published a short 'Biographical Notice' following Emily's death from tuberculosis, on December 19, 1848.

In it, Charlotte described how "Never in her life has she [Emily] lingered over any task that lay before her, and she did not linger now. She sank rapidly. She made haste to leave us."

These words have been interpreted to suggest that Emily wanted to die, that her refusal of aid led to the worsening of her condition, and from that that it could have been avoided.

Now, a new paper published in the journal Women's Writing has offered an alternative picture of the tragic event.

Dr Claire O'Callaghan, of Loughborough University, has questioned the idea that Emily's refusal of aid was 'stubborn and silly'.

She said: "My reading of Charlotte's letters challenges several of the dominant views about Emily's death and opens a way of thinking about her behaviour in her final months more rationally and compassionately.

"It dispels the myth that she was in denial about her sickness because we can see plainly that despite her protestants towards medical aid, she is responding to Charlotte's recommendations for her to allow a doctor to intervene and to take various remedies.

"It draws together Emily's knowledge of tuberculosis as outlined in her novel, Wuthering Heights, and thinks about how it might be relevant to her."

"There, she writes of a character whose consumption, as it was known at the time, was at a stage that was clearly beyond the point where medicine could make any difference and a doctor actually says this to the patient's husband."

"This shows that Emily's understood the nature of TB and its prognosis clearly."

Dr O'Callaghan's paper, *"She Resolutely Refuses to See a Doctor": Re-reading Emily Brontë and Tuberculosis in 1848; or Charlotte Brontë, Sickness and Correspondence*, also shows that Emily had access to that knowledge from the medical materials in the family home – their father's copy of Graham's Modern Medicine – which very clearly outlines the progressive stages of the disease, including the symptoms, and the tragic prognosis for the patient.

This provides a very rational reason for why Emily refused aid, said Dr O'Callaghan – that she understood the disease and the nature of her symptoms better than anyone else.

She added: "More importantly, Emily recognised that Victorian medicine offered no cure and as Charlotte's letters show, she clung to the idea of Emily being cured and recovering."

"In this light, my reading of the letters suggests that Emily's refusal of aid was her way of limiting her sister's investment in false hope."

"It is really interesting that just weeks after Emily's death, when Anne, their younger sister, was also showing the symptoms of TB, a doctor – a specialist on the disease – also responded to a letter from Charlotte warning her against the perils of false hope."

"Finally, my reading of the letters shows that Charlotte was keen to position herself as a nurse and Emily as a patient, but Emily didn't want that. Her insistence on maintaining her normal routines doesn't need to be read as stubborn, but to keep elements of normality in her life, which she knew was going to end."

The main findings outlined in Dr O'Callaghan's journal article are:

- Charlotte's letters have cultivated a one-sided account of Emily's final months, but what she says about Emily in them might be read from Emily's point of view.
- The letters show that there was tension between the sisters concerning Charlotte's views of how a 'good' consumptive patient should be and that unfairly colours her view of Emily as a 'bad' consumptive.
- A wider understanding of Emily's knowledge of tuberculosis (from her writing) coupled with the access she had to medical knowledge shows that she likely understood her prognosis. We can understand her behaviour more logically and compassionately in that light and moves us away from ideas of 'stubbornness'.
- That Emily understood that Victorian medicine offered no effective treatment or cure (unlike Charlotte, who believed in them). It situates current understandings of the disease within a Victorian context to show that, at the time,

showing symptoms of the display was the beginning of the end.

- That if Emily *did* call for a doctor in her final hours, it was more likely for pain relief in her final hours, as per medical recommendations (scholars and biographers tend to criticise the unreliable suggestion that she called for a doctor at all in light of her previous refusals, not recognising why that might have been the case if it did happen).
- That Emily's behaviour registers an understanding of Charlotte's false investment in hope for Emily's recovery.
- That contrary to the myth that neither Emily nor her family understood how poorly she was, that's just not the case: Charlotte's letters tell us of conversations within and between family members, and their father also warned Charlotte and Anne of investing in false hope of Emily's recovery.
- That Emily probably didn't speak to Charlotte about her illness because Charlotte's behaviour (elsewhere and in these letters) show how she repeatedly invaded Emily's privacy. Here, she was sharing the intimate details of her illness with family friends and their publishers.

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‘Myth’ of Emily Brontë’s death

<https://historyfirst.com/myth-of-emily-brontes-death-misreads-writers-merciful-motives/>

By
Mark Bridge <> January 20, 2023

Emily Brontë acted with pragmatism, courage and kindness in her last illness and the received wisdom that she was a “stubborn”, self-destructive patient is grossly unfair, according to an academic.

The *Wuthering Heights* author — one of the three celebrated Brontë sisters who were novelists and poets in 19th-century Yorkshire — left no account of her experience of tuberculosis. However, her older sister Charlotte’s letters chart Emily’s rapid decline, and her rejection of medical help, in the autumn and winter of 1848.

A new study claims that over-reliance on the letters by successive biographers and historians has fuelled a “mythic idea” of Emily’s death, aged 30, that fails to consider her predicament and point of view.

Writing to her friend Ellen Nussey and publishers George Smith, and William Smith Williams, Charlotte described repeatedly urging Emily to seek medical advice and treatment — and Emily’s dogged refusal. Charlotte said that Emily would only take Locock’s Pulmonic Wafers — popular cough lozenges — and an occasional mild laxative. She rejected Charlotte’s suggestion of homeopathy as “quackery” and declared that “no poisoning doctor” should come near her.

According to one of Charlotte’s letters to Williams, on November 22, Emily had “refused medicine [and] rejected medical advice” and no reasoning or entreaty would persuade her to see a doctor. The next day, Charlotte complained to Nussey that Emily “resolutely” refused expert help and would “give no explanation of her feelings”.

Only two months after the onset of visible symptoms, Emily died at home in the Haworth parsonage on December 19, 1848. Her

sister Anne's health also deteriorated that winter and, although she willingly accepted treatment, she also died of tuberculosis the following May, aged 29.

Dr Claire O'Callaghan, lecturer in English at Loughborough University, said Charlotte's exasperated letters and her *Biographical Notice* of Emily and Anne Brontë, published in 1850, had created an enduring false impression of Emily's attitude and behaviour. She said biographers had followed Charlotte's lead in suggesting that Emily was "stubborn" and a bad patient. In addition, they had painted her as, alternatively, in denial, suicidal or wilfully cruel.

"Biographers after biographers have followed Charlotte's line about her 'stubbornness'," she said. "It tends to be biographers of Charlotte or Emily who talk about Emily being a sulky teenager, being very nasty to her siblings, and not knowing what was best for her — shunning medicine in her naivety. You get these mixed interpretations where some people say she didn't realise how ill she was and others say she was being incredibly stubborn in the face of knowing how ill she was."

She added: "Emily's first biographer, Mary Robinson said that, after their brother Branwell died in September, Emily lost the will to live and that's why she died. She said that if she had only taken care of herself in the first few months of our illness, she might have survived it — which is just a complete misunderstanding of tuberculosis. It all adds to the mythic idea of Emily Brontë as this very difficult, very stoic woman who didn't know what was good for her."

O'Callaghan said her analysis, drawing on previously overlooked evidence and putting Emily's own perspective front and centre, indicated that she was not only acting rationally but also bravely and compassionately.

In the [study](#), in *Women's Writing*, she argues that Emily had almost certainly read the description of tuberculosis, or "consumption", in her father's copy of *Graham's Modern Domestic Medicine*. The manual would have made it clear to Emily that, after the onset of diarrhoea in mid-to-late November, she was in the "melancholy and distressing" final stage of the illness and beyond any hope of effective treatment or recovery.

O'Callaghan, author of the book *Emily Brontë Reappraised*, said Emily would also have attained practical knowledge of tuberculosis — and the limitations of 19th-century medical intervention — from the loss of three siblings to the disease. She had nursed her brother Branwell before his death weeks earlier, on September 24.

However, she said the biggest insight into Emily's mindset could be found in a neglected passage in her masterpiece *Wuthering Heights*. In the novel, published in December 1847, Emily draws attention to the character Hindley Earnshaw's futile response to his wife's failing health from tuberculosis. Hindley rejects the doctor's view that she is near death and declares: "Damn the doctor! . . . Frances is quite right: she'll be perfectly well by this time next week."

Nelly Dean, the narrator, describes how Hindley "persisted doggedly, nay, furiously, in affirming her health improved every day" and ignored the doctor's warning that his medicines were useless at that stage. According to Nelly, Hindley makes things worse for himself by rejecting Dr Kenneth's diagnosis and clinging resolutely to the false hope of Frances' recovery.

"She couldn't have written that scene without knowledge," said O'Callaghan. "In Haworth and the surrounding areas, tuberculosis was rife. She would have seen this. Her father was a curate performing lots of funerals, visiting lots of houses. And for me, when you place that knowledge with Dr Graham's book and *Wuthering Heights*, it gives a very compelling and logical understanding of why she might have refused the very limited medical options that were available to her at that time — because they were not going to do anything for her."

Rather than pursue a cure, Emily sought comfort in continuity and — as Charlotte quoted her words — to let nature "take her own course". O'Callaghan said: "She was insisting on doing all of her normal routines, pretty much right up until her last week. She wanted to feed her dogs. She wanted to get up and sit by the fire . . . By the week before she died, she was moving between being very, very unwell, and a little more lucid. Charlotte was reading to her and they were reading together as a family."

A late 19th-century engraving of Charlotte Brontë, after a painting by Alonzo Chappel. Photo: Wikimedia Commons

The “pulmonic wafers” that Emily took may have provided some general pain relief. Although the manufacturers emphatically denied that they contained morphine, a letter published in the *Association Medical Journal* — a forerunner of the *British Medical Journal* — in 1855 claimed to have found the drug present in the soluble lozenges.

O’Callaghan suggests that Emily may have felt that agreeing to Charlotte’s plans for medical aid would not only have been futile but would ultimately hurt her loved ones. She said: “In *Wuthering Heights*, Hindley maintains an investment in false hope when there is not going to be any cure. The outcome is something that everybody else in the room can see, apart from him. So Emily was very attuned to that and that gives us a logical reason why she was trying to stop Charlotte repeatedly seeking out various remedies, and trying to push her to take things.”

A letter from Charlotte to Williams on December 7 shows that she persisted in hoping for the best even after Patrick Brontë, the siblings’ father, was resigned. Charlotte said she could give no favourable report of Emily’s state, but continued: “Yet I argue that the present emaciation, cough, weakness, shortness of breath are the results of inflammation now, I trust, subsided, and that with time, these ailments will gradually leave her, but my father shakes his head and speaks of others of our family once similarly afflicted, for whom he likewise persisted in hoping against hope”.

In O’Callaghan’s analysis, Emily may have failed to give Charlotte any “explanation of her feelings” because she was still coming to terms with her own fate. Furthermore, she may have feared that Charlotte would break her confidence and share her words with others. She had previously invaded Emily’s privacy by reading her notebook and disclosing her author’s pseudonym of Ellis Bell beyond the family circle.

O’Callaghan said claims that Emily allowed Charlotte to call for a doctor in her final hours have been widely misinterpreted. “It was first reported by Elizabeth Gaskell in her [1857] biography of Charlotte. We don’t know that it ever happened. However, assuming it did, some biographers have seen it as another example of ‘silly Emily’ — that she left it too late and if she had only called for the doctor earlier, all could have been averted. I think that if she did indeed call for a doctor or agreed to see him, it was partly simply for pain relief. And that’s fair enough. People seem to want to deny her that, because of this idea that she had been stubborn. There is a tone in biographies that seems to imply,

'Well, you haven't called a doctor until now, so you're not really entitled to do it, you silly girl'.

"But I also think it would have given Charlotte something to do. So, it could either have been calling for pain relief, or benevolently giving Charlotte what she wanted — to feel that she was doing something in those final moments."

She hopes people will view Emily's actions more sympathetically in light of her findings.

She said: "Attributing that attitude of stubbornness, or the idea that she was trying to be deliberately cruel to her family, is a reductive shorthand for not thinking through what it might have meant for a woman to be suffering with a terminal illness at a young age. I'd like people to have some more compassion for her, and more empathy. Not only would she have been grappling with her own mortality, but her brother had just died and her family was traumatised by tuberculosis, which she now had. That's a lot for anyone to bear.

"Just think about how courageous she was — it can't have been easy to be resisting any form of medical intervention. To think that's simply stubbornness doesn't do her justice and doesn't serve the complexity of the situation."

Nevertheless, she said the actions of Charlotte Brontë — who died in 1855, aged 38 — should also be viewed sympathetically. "I wouldn't want people to respond by hating Charlotte and thinking she did something deliberately cruel . . . It's understandable that she wanted to do everything to save her sister. Who wouldn't?"

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1820



1849



There are great books in this world and great worlds in books.

~ Anne Brontë

AZ QUOTES



{ <https://www.nastywomenwriters.com/woman-writer-anne-bronte-to-tell-the-truth-1820-1849/> }

Posted by [Maria Dintino](#) | Nov 29, 2022 | [Nasty Women Writers](#)

It is said that Anne Brontë's novel *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* is the most shocking of the Brontë sisters' novels and after rereading it, I have to agree. It still startles in its honest depiction of domestic abuse and subsequent fear, isolation and misery.

Anne Brontë, the youngest of the Brontë brood, utilized a different writing style, one labeled realism, unlike her literary sisters, Charlotte and Emily, whose masterpieces are models of gothic and dark romance.

"Anne was, of the sisters, perhaps the most rigorously logical, the most quietly observant, the most realistic, and, in certain spheres, the most tenacious, the most determined, and the most courageous. All of these qualities were to emerge as her life unfolded"(4).

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"In *The Tenant*, Anne uses multiple storytellers and embedded narratives. In this she may have been following Emily's *Wuthering Heights*, but she employs the technique to very different ends. In both novels, [Anne's two] a privileging of the woman as narrator allows Anne to create a female reality formerly uncharted in novels" (Langland 31).

And this particular female reality is harrowing. Fortunately, the protagonist is wise and grows emotionally strong, for herself and others.

Anne isn't as well-known as her older literary sisters, but she clearly should be. She wrote two novels, *Agnes Grey* and the one we're focusing on here, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*. Anne also wrote juvenilia with her sisters and brother, Branwell, as well as poetry.

Anne passed in 1849 at age twenty-nine, not long after *The Tenant* was published, and only months after her sister Emily of *Wuthering Heights* fame passed. Her oldest surviving sister Charlotte believed the writing of *The Tenant* contributed to Anne's death because of its subject matter, and suppressed its being republished for five years.

Yet, it seems completing *The Tenant* and seeing its sales soar must have been fulfilling for Anne. She was the most religious of the Brontës, believing strongly in salvation, and revealing such critical truths as she does in the book might assist others to live a cleaner, more integral and honest life while here on Earth.

After Anne's passing, Charlotte says of *The Tenant*:

"The choice of subject was an entire mistake. Nothing less congruous with the writer's nature could be conceived. The motives which dictated this choice were pure, but I think, slightly morbid"(qtd in Langland 47).

But Langland adds:

"Speaking of Anne as morbid, dejected, brooding, pursuing work she hated and that did her harm, Charlotte projects onto her sister her own strong distaste for *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*"(47).

Why Charlotte's distaste for *The Tenant*? Perhaps it was too radical for the more conservative Charlotte, who then was left to navigate the Brontë literary landscape alone.

As mentioned, Anne's final novel is considered one of the first feminist novels in that it directly exposes and challenges the unenviable position of women in Victorian England:

"A full awareness of these inequities in British law informs Anne Brontë's novel *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, which also explodes the myth of domestic heaven and exposes domestic hell, from which the protagonist ultimately flees into hiding" (Langland 25).

The Tenant is a page-turner, a gripping story in that you want to know what happens, how and to whom. I read *The Tenant* as an undergraduate years ago, and this second read reminded me that the protagonist Helen Huntingdon is one of my absolute favorite heroines.

So that you might see what I mean, I'll share some of her thoughts and words, along with just enough of the storyline to not give too much away.

In the beginning of *The Tenant*, a young Helen struggles to heed her aunt's advice about choosing her mate wisely and ignores or justifies the numerous red flags around her choice, Arthur Huntingdon. Yes, Helen loves him and yes, he's a charmer, but oh, those red flags of infidelity and partying, if they be true!

Helen believes SHE can reform him, as is evident in this discussion with her exasperated aunt (who raised Helen):

'That sounds presumptuous, Helen! Do you think you have enough [principle] for both; and do you imagine your merry, thoughtless profligate would allow himself to be guided by a young girl like you?'

'No; I should not wish to guide him; but to think I might have influence sufficient to save him from some errors, and I should think my life well spent in the effort to preserve so noble a nature from destruction. He always listens attentively now, when I speak seriously to him (and I often venture to reprove his random way of talking), and sometimes he says that if he had me always by his side he should never do or say a wicked thing, and that a little daily talk with me would make him quite a saint. It may be partly jest and partly flattery, but still-'(141).

But still...Helen is set up for just what we as readers fear: an unhappy situation. Helen initially attempts to justify Arthur's behavior, blaming it on him being spoiled as a boy in a family of some wealth, but it isn't long before nothing is working well in the Huntingdon household.

Helen and Arthur's marital and domestic bliss is short-lived. Here is an excerpt of a scene that takes place while there are guests at their house, which include Arthur's friend Hattersley and his wife Millicent, narrated by Helen:

'Now Millicent, tell me what you were crying for.'

'I'll tell you some other time,' murmured she, 'when we are alone.'

'Tell me now!' said he with another shake and a squeeze that made her draw in her breath and bite her lip to suppress a cry of pain.

'I'll tell you, Mr. Hattersley,' said I. 'She was crying from pure shame and humiliation for you; because she could not bear to see you conduct yourself so disgracefully.'

'Confound you, Madam!' muttered he, with a stare of stupid amazement at my 'impudence.' 'It was *not* that – was it Millicent?' She was silent.

'Come, speak up child!'

'I can't tell now,' sobbed she.

'But you can say "yes" or "no" as well as "I can't tell"- come!'

'Yes,' she whispered, hanging her head and blushing at the awful acknowledgement.

'Curse you for an impertinent huzzy then!' cried he, throwing her from him with such violence that she fell on her side; but she was up again before either I or her brother could come to her assistance, and made the best of her way out of the room, and I suppose, up stairs, without loss of time'(267).

Throughout the novel, Anne exposes a culture of violence and toxic masculinity, and its unappealing results. As Langland says:

"Not only does Anne Bronte thus revise our awe at male physical strength, she exhibits in her heroines no symptoms of attraction to the violence. Whereas a Charlotte Bronte heroine will 'often respond in a disturbingly masochistic way to masculine aggression', an Anne Bronte heroine is revolted by the abuse of strength. She does not seek a master; she seeks a partner"(57).

Helen finds no partnership with Arthur, especially when she discovers that he is carrying on with one of his friend's wives, prompting this discussion:

'Well, Helen, I won't repeat the offence. But I meant nothing by it, I assure you. I had taken too much wine, and I was scarcely myself, at the time.'

'You often take too much; – and that is another practice I detest.' He looked up astonished at my warmth. 'Yes,' I continued. 'I never mentioned it before, because I was ashamed to do so; but now I'll tell you that it distresses me, and may disgust me, if you go on and suffer the habit to grow upon you, as it will, if you don't check it

in time. But the whole system of your conduct to Lady Lowborough, is not referrible to wine; and this night you knew perfectly well what you were doing.'

'Well, I'm sorry for it,' replied he, with more of sulkiness than contrition: 'what more would you have?'

'You are sorry that I saw you, no doubt,' I answered coldly.

'If you had not seen me,' he muttered, fixing his eyes on the carpet, 'it would have done no harm.'

My heart felt ready to burst; but I resolutely swallowed back my emotion, and answered calmly, 'You think not?'

'No.' replied he, boldly. 'After all, what have I done? It's nothing – except as you choose to make it a subject of accusation and distress.'

'What would Lord Lowborough, your *friend* think, if he knew all? Or what would you yourself think, if he or any other had acted the same part to me, throughout, as you have to Annabella?'
'I would blow his brains out.'

'Well, then, Arthur, how can you call it nothing – an offence for which you would think yourself justified in blowing another man's brains out? Is it nothing to trifle with your friend's feelings and mine – to endeavor to steal a woman's affections from her husband – what he values more than his gold, and therefore what is more dishonest to take? Are the marriage vows a jest; and is it nothing to make it your sport to break them, and to tempt another to do the same? Can I love a man that does such things, and coolly maintains it is nothing?'

'You are breaking your marriage vows yourself,' said he, indignantly rising and pacing to and fro. 'You promised to honour and obey me, and now you attempt to hector over me, and threaten and accuse me and call me worse than a highwayman. If it were not for your situation Helen, I would not submit to it so tamely. I won't be dictated to by a woman, though she be my wife.'(224).

Overindulgence, especially with alcohol, is a constant and disturbing theme in this novel and it may be due to what Anne and the rest of her family endured with their brother Branwell, an addict who, as sometimes happens in these situations, put the entire family through hell.

Here are some of Helen's thoughts when the situation between her and Arthur has deteriorated to the point of distress:

"Have I not laboured long and hard to save him from this very vice? Would I not labour still, to deliver him from it, if I could? But could I do so by fawning upon him and caressing him when I know that he scorns me? Is it my fault that I have lost my influence with him, or that he has forfeited every claim to my regard? And should I seek a reconciliation with him, when I feel that I abhor him, and that he despises me? – and while he continues still to correspond with Lady Lowborough, as I know he does? No, never, never, never! – he may drink himself dead, but it is NOT my fault!"(309).

The clarity of Helen's thought process, her conviction, and ultimately her decision to take control of her situation are impressive and exciting.

Helen's ultimate breaking point is when Arthur and his friends begin to corrupt their small son, providing him alcohol, teaching him to curse, and initiating him as one of the boys. Helen laments:

"My greatest source of uneasiness, in this time of trial, was my son, whom his father and his father's friends delighted to

encourage in all the embryo vices a little child can show, and to instruct in all the evil habits he could acquire – in a word, to ‘make a man of him’ was one of their staple amusements; and I need say no more to justify my alarm on his account, and my determination to deliver him at any hazard from the hands of such instructors”(335).

It was evident to close friends of the Huntingdon’s that their marriage was very strained. One of Arthur’s friends interprets that as an opportunity to swoop in and capture the vulnerable Helen. This doesn’t play out as Mr. Hargrave hopes. Again, narrated by Helen:

‘No one has ever dared insult me as you are doing now!’ said I, at length releasing my hands, and recoiling from him.

‘I do not insult you,’ cried he: ‘I worship you. You are my angel – my divinity! I lay my powers at your feet – and you must and shall accept them!’ he exclaimed impetuously, starting to his feet – ‘I will be your consoler and defender! And if your conscience upbraid you for it, say I overcame and you could not choose but yield!’

I never saw a man so terribly excited. He precipitated himself towards me. I snatched up my palette-knife and held it against him. This startled him: he stood and gazed at me in astonishment; I dare say I looked as fierce and resolute as he. I moved to the bell and put my hand upon the cord. This tamed him still more. With a half-authoritative, half-deprecating wave of the hand, he sought to deter me from ringing.

‘Stand off, then!’ said I. He stepped back, – ‘And listen to me. – I don’t like you,’ I continued, as deliberately and emphatically as I could, to give greater efficacy to my words; ‘and if I were divorced from my husband – or if he were dead, I would not marry you. There now! I hope you’re satisfied.’

His face grew blanched with anger.

'I am satisfied,' he replied with bitter emphasis, 'that you are the most cold-hearted, unnatural, ungrateful woman I ever beheld!'

As the story progresses, Helen crafts her elaborate plan to escape with her son and faithful attendant, an unlawful and unheard of doing, and readers hold their breath that she will pull it off. When finally she does, we rejoice with her!

'Thank Heaven, I am free and safe at last!...Oh, what delight it was to be thus seated aloft, rumbling along the broad, sunshiny road, with the fresh morning breeze in my face, surrounded by an unknown country all smiling – cheerfully, gloriously, smiling in the yellow lustre of those early beams, – with my darling child in my arms, almost as happy as myself and my faithful friend beside me; a prison and despair behind me, receding farther, farther back at every clatter of the horses' feet,- and liberty and hope before!'(373-374).

This is far from the end of Helen's story, but to see this woman free herself, along with protecting her son, is a victory for sure. There is so much more writer Anne has to share with the reader around this situation, for instance how Helen never speaks badly about Arthur to their son, and ultimately does all she can to mitigate the fallout from her decision. Helen is in no way the cold-hearted woman she is accused to be by speaking up for herself and others and ultimately saving her own life.

Helen is an incredible role model and heroine created by Anne Brontë and ingeniously delivered through *The Tenant*.



The only bona fide portraits that exist of Anne, drawn by sister Charlotte and brother Branwell sometime in the 1830s.

As Langley explains in *Anne Brontë: The Other One*:

"Anne Brontë's fiction is distinctive in its yoking of a strong moral end with an absolute fidelity to representing reality as she saw it....This moral emphasis, so different from her sisters', may partially account for her less favourable reception...The distinctions between Anne and her better known sisters continue in the emphasis Anne puts on spiritual development. The goals of an Anne Brontë protagonist are to cultivate the spirit and to learn self-command or control as ways of lessening one's vulnerability to the vicissitudes of life" (37).

I believe cultivating the spirit and developing self-control are worthy goals. Not the only goals, but worthy ones for sure.

Langland continues:

"Anne Brontë is surely an author worthy of interest in her own right. Her thematic innovations place her in the forefront of feminist thought in the nineteenth century even as her formal and technical innovations demand that we look again at her contributions to the English novel"(60).

There is often the inclination to compare, and this temptation is even greater when there are siblings involved. Clearly all three Brontë sisters, Anne, Emily and Charlotte were beyond talented and wrote classic novels, ones that have stood the test of time and will continue to do so. There is no need to put one above the other, except perhaps as personal preference.

Also, it's important to avoid lumping them together, as again, we often do with siblings, and to recognize each for her talents and contributions.

As Elizabeth Langley says, "If there are three geniuses, then we must count them three"(60). Indeed.

Anne Brontë is a Nasty Woman Writer in her very own right.



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Writer of Genius & Woman of Courage

Anne Brontë:

<https://www.annebronte.org/>



Anne Brontë was born in the village of Thornton, Bradford in the West Riding of Yorkshire on 17th January 1820. The Brontë family moved to Haworth just a few months later. A brilliant author, inspired poet, and a woman ahead of her time, this Anne Brontë website will take a closer look at her life, and that of her family. I will also bring you the latest news regarding Brontë events across the United Kingdom and beyond.



Anne Brontë's birthplace in Thornton, near Bradford

Anne was born to Patrick Brontë, a Church of England priest from humble beginnings in Ireland, and Maria Brontë, nee Branwell, from a merchant family in Cornwall. She was the sixth Brontë child to be born, after Maria and Elizabeth, who would both die tragically young, Charlotte, her brother Patrick Branwell (always known by his middle name) and her beloved sister Emily Jane.

Anne's too brief life was strewn with triumph and tragedy. Her mother died when Anne was just one year old, and her two youngest sisters soon followed. She was in many ways the most practical of the Brontë sisters. Although shy and reserved, she overcame her struggles and was the only one of the siblings to hold down a job for any length of time.

Anne fell in love with her father's assistant curate William Weightman, but this kind man's life was cut short by cholera before their love could fully blossom. It was this loss that led to Anne's succession of poems of loss and mourning.

Anne Brontë's poetry was pivotal to the Brontë story. It was Anne's production of her own verse that persuaded the reticent Emily to consent to their collected poems being sent to a publisher – a move that led to the first Brontë book to be published: *Poems by Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell*.



(L-R) Anne, Emily and Charlotte Brontë by Patrick Branwell Brontë, 1834

Anne has tended, unfairly, to be overshadowed by her sisters Charlotte and Emily, but she is one of the greatest Victorian writers in her own right. Her debut novel *Agnes Grey*, published alongside Emily's *Wuthering Heights*, is a beautiful and impeccably structured novel. It is a largely autobiographical tale of the struggles of a governess, and in many ways foreshadowed Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* written a year later.

Anne's second novel *The Tenant Of Wildfell Hall* is a revolutionary work, dealing unflinchingly with subjects including alcohol and opium addiction, marital cruelty and infidelity, class inequality, and the right of women to choose their own path in life. It has been called the first fully formed feminist novel, and is still stunning readers with its power and veracity today.

Anne had achieved literary success, and there was the promise of further greatness to come, but within a year tragedy struck as Branwell, Emily, and finally Anne Brontë died of tuberculosis in rapid succession. Anne is buried in Scarborough, overlooking the sea that she loved so much.



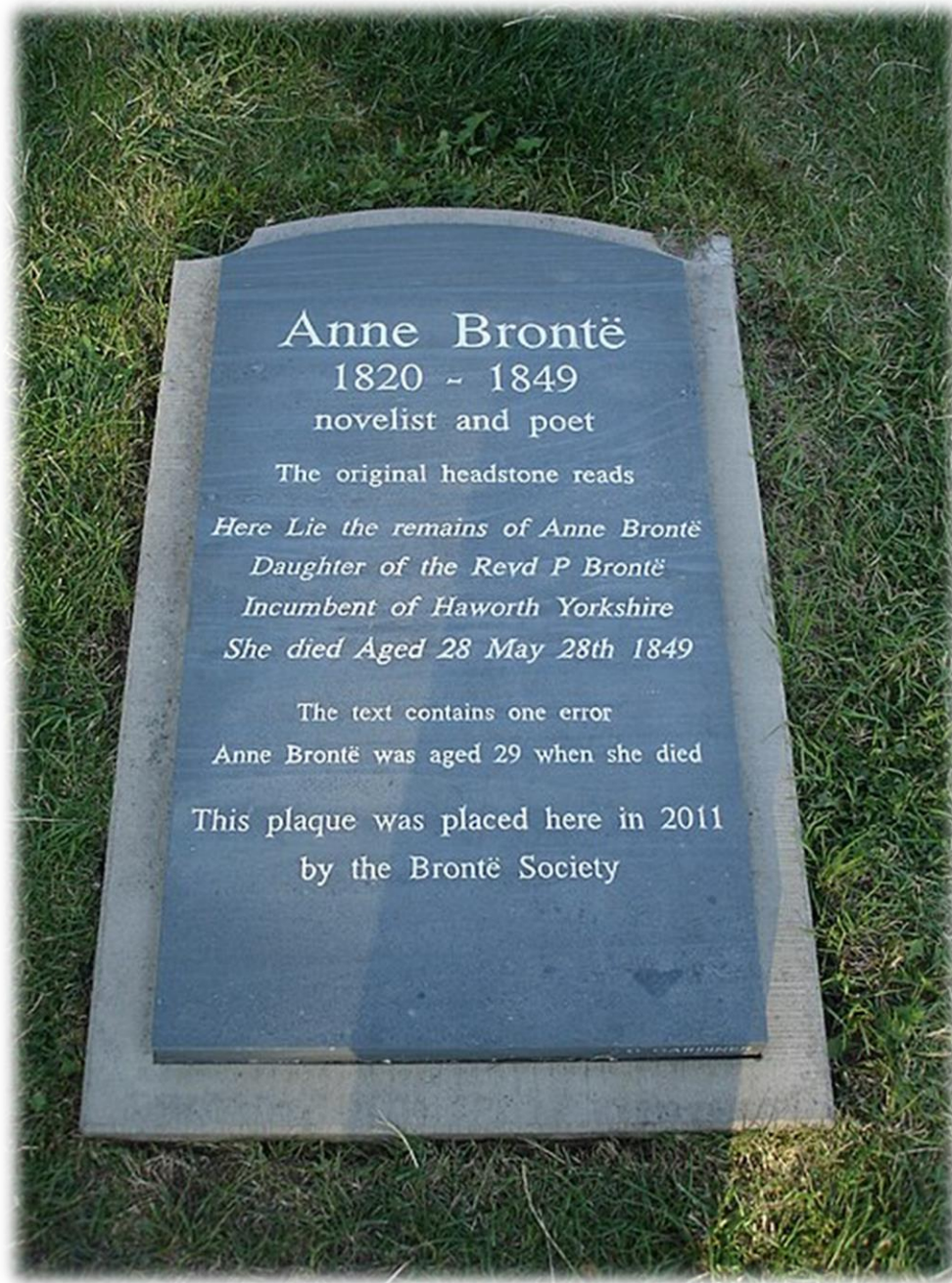
Anne Brontë's final resting place at Scarborough

As we approach the two hundredth anniversary of the birth of Anne Brontë, she is at last gaining the respect and attention that her talent deserves. It was a desire to put Anne into the spotlight that led to me writing my critically acclaimed biography *In Search Of Anne Brontë*, and it is the driving ethos behind this website and blog as well.

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Grave Error Corrected

{<https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-22351887>}



A new plaque on the grave has been officially unveiled by the Bronte Society

Author Anne Bronte, the sister of Charlotte and Emily, has been given a new gravestone after 164 years to correct an error on the original.

Anne, who wrote *Agnes Grey* and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, died in Scarborough in 1849 after succumbing to tuberculosis at the age of 29.

A new plaque on her grave has been officially unveiled during a service of dedication.

She travelled to Scarborough because she loved the resort and hoped that the air may improve her condition. But she died just three days after arriving.

Anne Bronte's original gravestone has deteriorated over the years.

Charlotte continued to write after her siblings' deaths and later married, only to die herself in March 1855.

[illegible]

Poetry Foundation

Anne Brontë

{<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/anne-bronte>}



In *Conversations in Ebury Street* (1924), George Moore declared that "if Anne Brontë had lived ten years longer, she would have taken a place beside Jane Austen, perhaps even a higher place"; in addition, he described her first novel, *Agnes Grey* (1847), as "the most perfect prose narrative in English literature."

If Moore's estimation of Brontë's work and potential was somewhat inflated, his claims for her served as an overdue and refreshing corrective to the trend—long established by biographers and critics—of either damning her with faint praise or making her the subject of frankly disparaging remarks. Typical of the latter were May Sinclair's dismissal of her as "the weak and ineffectual Anne" and George Saintsbury's pronouncement that "the third sister Anne is but a pale reflection of her elders." The cumulative effect made Brontë appear a nebulous figure in the history of English letters; and led to the widely accepted concept of her as an artist and a woman of no importance.

The source of this misleading image of Anne Brontë was her

older sister Charlotte, who became, in effect, her first biographer and critic. Since Anne's life is not well documented (only a handful of her letters and papers are extant), there has been an inevitable tendency to rely too much on information about her from reported and written statements by Charlotte. Many of these—particularly her lukewarm assessments of Anne's literary abilities and her frequent references to Anne's pensiveness, docility, and religious morbidity—were accepted for decades as absolute; now they are being weighed more carefully as Charlotte's objectivity as a witness and impartiality as a judge are cross-examined.

Some of the undisputed facts about Anne Brontë are that she was the youngest daughter of the Reverend Patrick and Maria Branwell Brontë; that she was born in the northeastern county of Yorkshire, England; and that she spent her childhood and formative years in the Brontës' family home—the parsonage on the outskirts of the remote village of Haworth. She received her formal education between 1835 and 1837 at Miss Margaret Wooler's boarding school. During Anne's attendance there, the school was relocated from Roe Head to Dewsbury Moor, near Leeds.

Straitened family finances compelled Anne to search for employment, and between April and the latter part of 1839 she worked as a governess in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Joshua Ingham of Blake Hall. She occupied her second post as a governess to the three daughters of the Reverend and Mrs. Edmund Robinson of Thorp Green Hall, near York, for five years, beginning her duties in May 1840. Her brother, Branwell, joined her there in January 1843, when he was hired as tutor to the Robinsons' only son, Edmund. The significance of this period of Anne Brontë's life and the vital importance which it played in her education, her maturation, and her growing understanding of mankind should be neither overlooked nor underestimated. The Robinsons were wealthy and privileged and were related to people of importance (including a marquis and a member of

Parliament); the social milieu in which they moved was wide and varied. It can be fairly assumed that Anne Brontë, as a part of the Robinson household, came into contact with many of her employers' relations and friends; she would have had ample opportunity to observe their behavior at close quarters, thus gaining insights into the ways of the world which would have eluded her had she remained in the relatively narrow confines of Haworth Parsonage. Unfortunately, Anne's main extant direct reference to Thorp Green Hall is extremely brief, tantalizingly pregnant with meaning, but frustratingly cryptic; it concludes with the enigmatic words: "... during my stay I have had some very unpleasant and undreamt-of experience of human nature." After resigning in June 1845, she spent her few remaining years at Haworth with her father; her sisters, Charlotte and Emily; and her brother, Branwell; Emily and Branwell predeceased her in 1848.

From an early age, and until at least 1845, Anne and Emily (who were described as being "like twins, inseparable companions in the very closest sympathy") collaborated in writing the saga of a fictitious island named Gondal. Although none of their Gondal prose has survived, a number of their Gondal poems do exist.

A book of poems by Charlotte, Emily, and Anne, who used the pseudonyms of Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell respectively, appeared in 1846. Anne's first novel, *Agnes Grey*, was published in one of three volumes—the other two contained Emily's *Wuthering Heights*—in December 1847. Her second and last novel, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, was published in June 1848.

Anne Brontë's books are primarily concerned with morality; she is preoccupied with the ethical principles which, for good or ill, govern human behavior. Her two novels present a closely observed, occasionally satirical, rarely humorous, and often melancholy view of what she regards as a profoundly imperfect world. Her prose frequently achieves elegance through its simplicity; her direct and didactic manner is tempered with a

disarming sincerity, so that it succeeds in persuading rather than alienating the reader. The philosophy guiding her intent as a writer is that "the end of Religion is not to teach us how to die, but how to live; and the earlier you become wise and good, the more of happiness you secure." Nevertheless, as the critic Terry Eagleton has observed, "for such a resolutely moral writer, Anne Brontë is remarkably unsung."

Agnes Grey is the novel in which, according to Mrs. Gaskell, Charlotte's "sister Anne pretty literally describes her own experience as a governess." This remark, which seems as much an oversimplification as saying that *Villette* (1853) is the novel in which Charlotte pretty literally describes own experience as a teacher in Brussels, has resulted in *Agnes Grey* being interpreted as a mere autobiography or diary—an estimation which does great disservice to Brontë's abilities as an artificer. This erroneous view of the book is also due, in part, to a frequent misunderstanding of the mode in which it is written. Purporting to be a "true history," it is in the tradition of the fictitious memoir which dates back to the eighteenth century and such novels as *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and *Moll Flanders* (1721). Indeed, the influence of Defoe and other writers of that period on Brontë has been noted frequently. *Moll Flanders* claims to be a true history and, like *Agnes Grey*, contains many references to its truthfulness and moral purpose. Moll's avowal that "publishing this account of my life is for the sake of the just moral of every part of it, and for instruction, caution, warning, and improvement to every reader" is closely echoed by Agnes Grey's claim that "my design, in writing the last few pages, was not to amuse, but to benefit those whom it might concern," and by the phrase which begins the novel: "All true histories contain instruction."

Brontë's publicly declared purpose as a writer (stated in her preface—dated 22 July 1848—to the second edition of *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*) was "to tell the truth, for truth always conveys its own moral to those who are able to receive it ... and if I can gain the public ear at all, I would rather whisper a few

wholesome truths therein than much soft nonsense." Clearly, she intended to instruct, and she shrewdly chose the most appropriate form to achieve her goal; Inga-Stina Ewbank points out that "for the purposes of instruction, truth is more impressive than fiction—hence her [Brontë's] insistence on *Agnes Grey* being a genuine autobiography."

Brontë does not analyze the workings of the human mind; rather, she writes in what F. R. Leavis has described, in another context, as "the tradition coming down from the eighteenth century that demanded a plane-mirror reflection of the surface of 'real' life." Consequently, she makes the reader form opinions of her fictional people by their actions rather than by the psychological forces which motivate those actions. She reveals the nature of her characters not so much by what they think as by what they say and do. The resulting effect bears a resemblance to a morality play—a world of black and white, right and wrong, in which only very occasionally is the conscience of a character torn between the polarities of good and evil.

In *Agnes Grey*, goodness is equated with adherence to a set of values which takes for granted the supreme importance of love and compassion for one's fellow man as stated in the tenets of Christianity; but such goodness is represented by only a tiny minority of characters in the book. Among them are Agnes herself; her father, an impoverished clergyman; her mother, who, by marrying Mr. Grey for love against the wishes of her wealthy parents, has cheerfully sacrificed a handsome inheritance and thus rejected materialism; and by Agnes's elder sister, Mary.

It is of great import that all the characters in the story for whom Agnes feels true affinity and respect are members of the poor and working classes; one of these is Edward Weston, a conscientious, underpaid curate of firm faith and ardent piety, whom Agnes marries in the final chapter. Through her sympathetic presentation of such people, juxtaposed with her

unflattering and often satirical depiction of the hollow values of the bourgeoisie and the aristocracy, Brontë makes an unmistakable equation between wealth and moral bankruptcy. In its indictment of the conduct of the financially privileged members of Victorian England, *Agnes Grey* qualifies as a novel of sociological as well as moral significance. It is also a novel about failure—a subtly cynical portrayal of the triumph of mediocrity over excellence.

Agnes begins her career as a governess at the age of eighteen, with eager, almost naive anticipation: "how charming to be entrusted with the care and education of children ... to train the tender plants, and watch their buds unfolding day by day!" But chapter two (which has the splendidly ironic title "First Lessons in the Art of Instruction") marks the beginning of Agnes's disillusionment; soon after initial contact with her first pupils, she becomes conscious of "a vicious tendency in the bud." The rest of the story depicts her varied, valiant, but futile attempts to combat the callousness, selfishness, vanity, greed, cruelty, and indifference of her employers and her young charges.

The human failings (and their unhappy consequences) which Agnes so clearly deplores are most effectively demonstrated in the career of her oldest pupil, Rosalie Murray. Agnes's evaluation of her is clear-sighted but compassionate: "her faults ... I would fain persuade myself, were rather the effect of her education than her disposition: she had never been perfectly taught the distinction between right and wrong." With the connivance of her unscrupulous and ambitious mother, Rosalie exchanges her idle career as a heartless coquette for a marriage of convenience to a wealthy, aristocratic, but debauched man, Sir Thomas Ashby. In her eagerness to become the mistress of Ashby Park, Rosalie rationalizes that "reformed rakes make the best husbands, *everybody* knows." Agnes Grey knows better!

Agnes's own marriage to Edward Weston serves as a modest rather than triumphant conclusion to the novel; he is a vaguely

sketched, particularly one-dimensional character, and her union with him seems to be Brontë's nod in the direction of the traditional happy ending. In dramatic terms, the event is anticlimactic and at variance with the powerful sense of disillusionment which pervades two chapters near the end of the novel, when Agnes pays her final visit to Rosalie. Having confided to Agnes that she now despises her rich, dissipated husband, Rosalie is reluctant to let her former governess go. The following excerpt from chapter twenty-three demonstrates, in style, the clarity of Brontë's prose; in content, it testifies to the author's tacit acknowledgment of the predominantly melancholy nature of the human condition: "it was with a heavy heart that I bade adieu to poor Lady Ashby, and left her in her princely home. It was no slight additional proof of her unhappiness, that she should so cling to the consolation of my presence, and earnestly desire the company of one whose general tastes and ideas were so little congenial to her own—whom she had completely forgotten in her hours of prosperity, and whose presence would be rather a nuisance than a pleasure, if she could but have half her heart's desire." The supreme irony of this often ironic novel is that it is Agnes—a teacher by instinct and profession—who learns how to come to terms with life. *She* is the pupil who says "I had been seasoned by adversity, and tutored by experience," and who, as a result, formulates the simple but sound philosophy that "the best way to enjoy yourself is to do what is right and hate nobody." Her ultimate defeat is that she has failed to educate others to share that philosophy. Why the author allowed this defeat is better understood if one recalls that elsewhere Brontë qualified her contention that "truth always conveys its own moral" by adding the artfully sardonic phrase: "to those who are able to receive it."

Agnes Grey was received quite warmly when it appeared in 1847, but being published as part of a "three-decker" with *Wuthering Heights* was definitely not to its advantage. Emily's novel had a mixed reception: it was generally misunderstood and considered "coarse"—as, indeed, were all the

early Brontë novels when they were first presented to the public—but its strangeness and eccentricities made good copy. Consequently, it got the attention, if not necessarily the praise, of the critics. The inevitable comparisons were made, and *Agnes Grey*—by its very nature—appeared "less powerful."

The major preoccupation of Brontë's other novel, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848), is very much the same as that of *Agnes Grey*, but the war between good and evil is waged on a considerably larger battleground. *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* is much longer than its predecessor, and more complex in structure, scope, and the number of characters it contains.

It has been suggested that *Agnes Grey* influenced the composition of *Jane Eyre*, and close examination shows that they contain a considerable number of similarities in "cast of thought, incident and language." For example, Agnes's "marked features," "pale hollow cheek," and "ordinary dark brown hair" anticipate Jane Eyre's unprepossessing physical appearance. (Traditionally, it is Charlotte, not Anne, who has been credited with the introduction of the irreversibly plain heroine to English fiction.)

Also, there are indications that *Wuthering Heights* influenced the subsequent composition of *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*. The two books have a number of similarities, including an unusual degree of passionate intensity (in *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, this is particularly evident in the vehemence of which Gilbert Markham is capable). George Moore commented that Anne Brontë "could write with heat, one of the rarest qualities"—but it is a quality conspicuous by its absence in *Agnes Grey*. *Wuthering Heights* and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* also show similarities in construction, such as the device of employing double narrators—Mr. Lockwood and Ellen Dean in *Wuthering Heights*; in *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, Gilbert Markham and Helen Huntingdon.

Gilbert—a gentleman farmer—falls in love with Helen, the

enigmatic tenant of Wildfell Hall, who is presumed to be a widow. She is, in fact, the estranged wife of the alcoholic and lecherous Arthur Huntingdon. Gilbert's narrative, in the early chapters, skillfully maintains the air of mystery which surrounds Helen and demonstrates his growing attachment to her. This narrative, which begins and ends the novel, is contained in a series of letters (the form bears some resemblance to Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* [1818]). Gilbert's letters provide the framework for a transcript of Helen's diary, which she has given to Gilbert to help him understand the trials of her past life. This diary, containing a graphic account of her optimistic entry into marriage with Huntingdon and of the gradual disintegration of that marriage brought about by his debauchery, occupies the central and major part of the novel.

Arthur Huntingdon and his cronies are forcefully portrayed; the depths of depravity to which they are capable of sinking is demonstrated in some remarkably vivid and lurid scenes, and there has been some speculation that Brontë's inspiration for such incidents could have come from her years at Thorp Green Hall. Charlotte Brontë claimed that Anne "had, in the course of her life, been called on to contemplate, near at hand, and for a long time, the terrible effects of talents misused and faculties abused." The reference is to their brother, Branwell's, refuge in alcohol and drugs following his abrupt dismissal from his post as tutor at Thorp Green Hall. To the end of his life, Branwell adhered to his assertion that the cause of that dismissal was the discovery by his employer, the Reverend Edmund Robinson, of a clandestine love affair between Branwell and Robinson's wife, Lydia. The suggestion that Anne may have been an unwilling witness to this liaison is interesting but refutable; what is beyond dispute is that she closely observed the ravaging effects that gin and laudanum had on the mind and body of her brother.

Helen Huntingdon's diary effectively demonstrates her gradual metamorphosis from an optimistic, eager young girl—convinced that she can reform her rakish, irresponsible husband—into a mature, somewhat cynical, worldly-wise woman. It depicts her

long, arduous struggle to persuade the man she loves to heed the principles of Christianity in order to overcome his many weaknesses and to live a life that will lead to salvation, not degradation. Helen, like Agnes Grey, is highly principled and deeply religious; also like Agnes, she is a teacher by instinct. Helen firmly believes that "it is our duty to admonish our neighbours of their transgressions"; and when speaking of her son, Helen states that "the child's education was the only pleasure and business of my life." Plainly, she is adamant that the son will not emulate the behavior of the father, and that he will be "perfectly taught the distinction between right and wrong."

Unlike Agnes, she is not a teacher by profession; she is, in fact, a member of the privileged classes. Consequently, compared with Agnes, she is much more openly self-assured and composed. Brontë succeeds admirably in convincing the reader of the air of elegance in Helen's demeanor and the element of self-reliance in her conduct (which strongly hints of feminism). In the words addressed by Helen to her enemies (including her husband's shallow mistress, Annabella Wilmot), Brontë employs a grand style of language which is reminiscent in its imperious tone of the prose in wrathful letters of the first Queen Elizabeth.

Although *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, like *Agnes Grey*, has a conventional happy ending (Huntingdon dies as the result of his excesses, and after a respectable lapse of time, Helen marries Gilbert), it, too, is a novel about defeat. Ultimately, the significance of the marriages of Helen and Agnes to men who love them pales beside the facts that Helen has failed to save Arthur Huntingdon and that Agnes has failed to save Rosalie Murray. Both books have overtones of despair, reflecting Brontë's bleak but realistic and unflinching view of the world.

The reviews of *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* in the summer of 1848 were varied; an accusation that the author had "a morbid love for the coarse, not to say the brutal" was echoed in several quarters, but the book was recommended by the *Athenaeum* as

"the most interesting novel we have read for a month past." A flurry of public interest led to a hurried printing of a second edition in August with a preface by the author—the final words she wrote specifically for publication. Brontë was bold and defiant in her response to a critic who had suggested that if *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* had been written by a woman, that fact would make it even more unpalatable to him: "in my own mind, I am satisfied that if a book is a good one, it is so whatever the sex of the author may be. All novels are or should be written for both men and women to read, and I am at a loss to conceive how a man should permit himself to write anything that would be really disgraceful to a woman, or why a woman should be censured for writing anything that would be proper and becoming for a man."

Charlotte Brontë was disturbed by *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* and made no secret of her distaste for the book. In her "Biographical Notice of Ellis and Acton Bell" (1850), she referred to the fact that Anne's second novel had had a predominantly unfavorable reception: "At this I cannot wonder. The choice of subject was an entire mistake. Nothing less congruous with the writer's nature could be conceived. The motives which dictated this choice were pure, but, I think, slightly morbid." Thus, in September 1850, in her influential position as one of the most lionized writers of her time, Charlotte Brontë helped to quell interest in *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* by publicly condemning it. Privately, during the same month, she sealed the fate of Anne's second novel by declining Smith, Elder's offer to issue a reprint edition, saying, "*Wildfell Hall* it hardly appears to me desirable to preserve." Less than seven years later, in her *Life of Charlotte Brontë*, Mrs. Gaskell's brief reference to *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* included this telling phrase: "it is little known."

During her brief and seemingly circumscribed life, Anne Brontë only once ventured outside her home county of Yorkshire; the occasion was a fleeting visit to London with Charlotte in July 1848, an incident now renowned in the annals of English

literature—it has even found a niche in the *Oxford Book of Literary Anecdotes*! The purpose of this urgent, hurried journey was to disprove the rumors then rampant (and unscrupulously fueled by Anne's and Emily's publisher T. C. Newby in order to capitalize on the astonishing current success of Charlotte's *Jane Eyre*) that Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell were not three authors but one. Determined to disassociate themselves from this falsehood, Anne and Charlotte gained entry to the Cornhill office of Charlotte's publisher George Smith, who had no knowledge of the Bells' true identities or of their gender; there, Charlotte startled him with the dramatic declaration, "We are three sisters."

Many years later, George Smith recorded his impressions of Anne, based on that very brief meeting with her; he said, "She was a gentle, quiet, rather subdued person, by no means pretty, yet of a pleasing appearance. Her manner was curiously expressive of a wish for protection and encouragement, a kind of constant appeal which invited sympathy." Although "of a pleasing appearance," Anne had no serious suitors during her lifetime; however, it has been suggested by some biographers—and avowed by others—that she was in love with William Weightman, an attractive, exuberant young man who served as the Reverend Patrick Brontë's curate from August 1839 until his death from cholera in September 1842. The evidence to support this theory is flimsy and is based primarily on a remark in a letter written by Charlotte: "He [Weightman] sits opposite to Anne at Church sighing softly and looking out of the corners of his eyes to win her attention—and Anne is so quiet, her looks so downcast—they are a picture." The significance of this statement is severely undermined by observations about Weightman made by Charlotte in other letters, which clearly demonstrate her opinion of him as an inveterate flirt; she says, among other things, "I'm afraid he is very fickle" and "He would fain persuade every woman under thirty whom he sees that he is desperately in love with her." It appears that Weightman did not feel strongly about Anne; the conjecture that she felt strongly about *him* is based on several of her poems, written after September 1842—

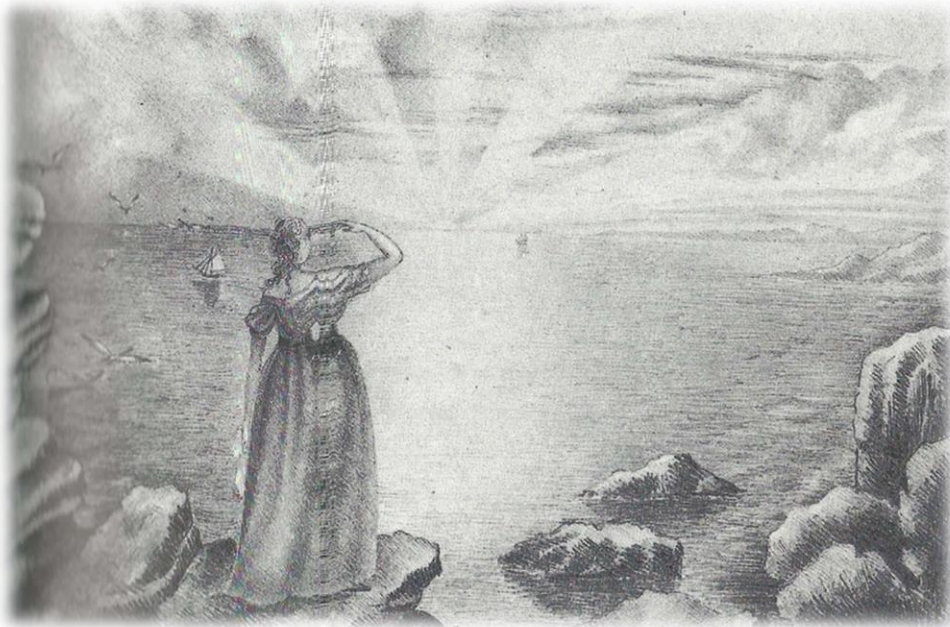
including *A Reminiscence* (1844) and *Severed and Gone* (1847)—which lament the death of a loved one and which *may* be autobiographical in nature. No other romantic connections are alleged for Anne; she received no recorded offers of marriage, and she died a spinster at the age of twenty-nine. Her death, from tuberculosis, took place at the coastal resort of Scarborough.

Eighty years separated Anne's death from W. T. Hale's *Anne Brontë: Her Life and Writings* (1929), the first publication to treat her as more than a peripheral player in the Brontë story and to challenge some of the myths which had surrounded "dear, gentle Anne." In his sympathetic, often astute monograph, Hale firmly states: "The truth about her is that her gentleness was not weakness. Childlike and unsophisticated in many ways she was, but she had a power of will and a strength of character that always carried out the dictates of her sense of duty." Professor Hale's point of view was innovative; and by choosing to focus his attention on Anne, he created a precedent. Since then, a number of prominent critics have deemed Anne Brontë and her work to be worthy of serious consideration. The result of this re-evaluation has been a growing conviction that she is a minor but worthwhile nineteenth-century novelist who, although admittedly less gifted than her sisters, demonstrates a considerable degree of individuality, originality, and even daring in her modest but far from negligible output.

F. B. Pinion's contention that "there can be little doubt that, had *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* received more critical attention, its merits would be more widely recognised," can be applied with equal validity to *Agnes Grey*. The 1979 publication of a carefully edited edition of *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* in the Penguin English Library and the appearance in the same year of *The Poems of Anne Brontë: A New Text and Commentary* by Edward Chitham are encouraging signs that there is indeed a growing trend to regard Anne's work in a fresh and positive light. There can be no doubt that as her books are more widely read—with care and attention—there will be a commensurate

acknowledgment and appreciation for what she achieved during her brief but productive life.

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Some Videos

[01] Anne Brontë in Her Own Words

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yJdtTn5dXVw> [56:09]

[Bradford Literature Festival]

The Brontë sisters – Emily, Charlotte and Anne – are often talked about in one breath without considering their own unique personalities. Anne Brontë's work, which included novels *Agnes Grey* and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, address feminist issues that are still subject to debate and discussion today. But what do these novels tell us about Anne herself, and do her poems and letters reveal more? In this panel discussion, chaired by Bidisha, Brontë experts Adelle Hay, Samantha Ellis and Marianne Thormählen look at what we can learn about the 'real' Anne Brontë as a writer and as a woman.

[02] "Agnes Grey", Anne Brontë | Guided reading

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C-KxixYwnCw> [1:11:21]

We begin a new series of guided reading sessions at Books & Culture! This time, we'll read together and discuss Anne Brontë's "*Agnes Grey*". In this first session, I introduce you to the author and the novel, and we read together.

[03] Underdog: Anne Brontë and Her Sisters

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nFWzIMo45A8> [59:49]

Bringing the overshadowed Brontë sister centre-stage, Sarah Gordon's play, *Underdog: The Other Other Brontë*, is a new co-production by Northern Stage, directed by Natalie Ibu and opening at The National Theatre in late March. After a life-long fascination with Emily Brontë, chronicled in her first book, *How To Be A Heroine*, Samantha Ellis realised there was more to explore, leading her to write a biography; *Take Courage: Anne Brontë and The Art of Life*. Join the two playwrights as they share their explorations of sisters, sisterhood and a remarkable overlooked writer. Chairing the discussion is Polly Teale, Arts Psychotherapist and former Artistic Director of Shared Experience Theatre Company, whose ground-breaking productions include the award-winning trilogy: *Brontë*; *Jane Eyre* and *After Mrs Rochester* (winner Best Director Evening Standard Awards, and Time Out Best West End Production). Sarah Gordon is a playwright and screenwriter. In 2020 she won the Nick Darke Award for *Underdog*, which is now being produced by Northern Stage. Previously Sarah's theatre work has been longlisted and shortlisted for The Women's Prize for Playwriting, The Bruntwood Award, Theatre Fest West and the Old Vic 12. She is currently developing several original series. Samantha Ellis is the author of *How to be a Heroine*, and *Take Courage: Anne Brontë and the Art of Life* (both published by Chatto & Windus) and her plays include *Cling to me Like Ivy*

and *How to Date a Feminist* (published by Nick Hern Books). She is writing her third book for Chatto, about the endangered language Judeo-Iraqi Arabic. She also wrote the introduction to Vintage Books's edition of *Agnes Grey*.

[04] Agnes Grey by Anne Brontë | Full Audiobook

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KRODh3q30t8> [7:40:14]

Anne Brontë's novel was published in 1847. The writer released it under the pseudonym Acton Bell and drew upon her own experiences working as a governess.

The youngest of the famous Brontë sisters beautifully portrays the broad social background of 19th-century England: parents' approach to education and child-rearing, the behind-the-scenes of marriages of convenience, and family relationships across different levels of the social ladder.

Forced by her family's poor financial situation, Agnes Grey takes a job as a governess. Young, full of hope, and eager to broaden her own horizons, she wishes to win the favor of her employers and their children.

However, her new charges turn out to be difficult and spoiled, while their parents are demanding, haughty, and unpleasant. Will a change of position bring her more happiness? Will she find the love she longs for in a new place.

[05] No Soft Nonsense: Presenting the Bold Anne Brontë

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kNcPtN20Sgc> [50:48]

Join Christine Nelson, Drue Heinz Curator of Literary and Historical Manuscripts, for a fresh look at Anne Brontë (1820–1849), bold author and truth-teller, through the artifacts she left behind. After Brontë published a pseudonymous novel featuring graphic depictions of addiction and domestic abuse, one reviewer accused the author of harboring “a morbid love for the coarse, not to say the brutal.” She issued a written retort: “If I can gain the public ear at all, I would rather whisper a few wholesome truths therein than much soft nonsense.” With highlights from the Morgan's collection of Brontëana, one of the finest in the world, this presentation complements the current bicentenary installation in the Rotunda of J. Pierpont Morgan's Library

[06] Breaking Boundaries: Anne Brontë's Feminist Legacy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iSWzzwAlLfY> [56:23]

Join us for a thought-provoking discussion as we celebrate the enduring feminist legacy of Anne Brontë, a pioneering voice in Victorian literature, with Brontë scholar, Rose Gant, and Anne Brontë biographer, Samantha Ellis. Anne, often overshadowed by her sisters, Charlotte and Emily, challenged societal norms and championed women's rights through her groundbreaking novels and poetry. From her portrayal of strong, independent female characters to her unflinching exploration of themes, such as domestic abuse, addiction, and female agency, Anne's writings continue to resonate with modern audiences and inspire generations of feminists.

[07] Rethinking Anne Brontë, Tuberculosis, and Victorian Medicine

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E8qBFICVDK8> [47:33]

In this webinar, Dr Claire O'Callaghan (Loughborough University) discusses tuberculosis, Victorian Medicine and Anne Brontë.

[08] Anne Bronte the Final Journey

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_yzBEP3Qyvc [37:01]

[09] The Brilliant Bronte Sisters | Unveiling the Genius

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A5TJ1CC-xZI> [47:10]

The Brilliant Bronte Sisters - "How did three secluded sisters living on the edge of the Yorkshire moors create novels that continue to captivate and shock the world? In The Brilliant Brontë Sisters, actress and writer Sheila Hancock embarks on a journey to uncover the mystery behind Charlotte, Emily, and Anne Brontë's extraordinary works. From the wild inspiration of Haworth's moors to the literary legacy shaped in Brussels, and Anne's peaceful resting place in Scarborough, this documentary reveals new insights into the lives of these iconic women. Join us to discover the timeless brilliance of Jane Eyre, Wuthering Heights, and The Tenant of Wildfell Hall like never before!"

[10] Complete Poems by Anne Brontë | Full Audio Book

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WkRkfkadNRE> [2:33:31]

[11] Anne Bronte Agnes Grey [57:07]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZBtnhuEBddY>

The novel tells the story of Agnes Grey, the daughter of a minister, whose family comes to financial ruin. Desperate to earn the money to care for herself, she takes one of the few jobs allowed to respectable women in the early Victorian era – the role of governess to the children of the wealthy. In working with two different families (the Bloomfields and the Murrays), she comes to learn about the troubles that face a young woman who must try to rein in unruly, spoiled children for a living, and about the ability of wealth and status to destroy social values. After her father's death, Agnes opens a small school with her mother and finds happiness with a man who loves her for herself. They have three children at the end of the novel, Edward, Agnes and Mary.

[12] Agnes Grey | Learn English through Story

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SYB6QvVLCTY> [1:58:08]

[13] BBC Radio Drama: Anne Brontë Agnes Grey

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OPvqRrSIUv4> [1:29:40]

[14] The Tenant of Wildfell Hall (2011) by Anne Bronte

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MBz_g7js8pw [2:16:56]

A new Bronte story today - there are plenty of adaptations of other stories like Jane Eyre and Wuthering Heights on the channel - now here's the first version of The Tenant of Wildfell Hall. It's a dark tale of a mysterious woman who has fled something terrible and taken up residence in the refuge of Wildfell Hall.

[15] The Tenant of Wildfell Hall, by Anne Brontë

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wnf-1buUhcY> [1:34:10]

[16] The Tenant of Wildfell Hall by Anne Bronte | Full Audiobook

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yZ_KvPOLOGg [20:54:12]

The life of today's Western woman may seem difficult, but how much more complicated was it in times when she was merely her husband's property, with no say in any important matter? The novel "The Tenant of Wildfell Hall" tells the story of such a woman, who simultaneously hides a difficult past from the world. How will the one who finally learns about it react?

A widow appears at the titular manor, whose beauty and mysteriousness quickly attracts many glances, especially one - that of a certain Gilbert Markham. Her arrival is shrouded in secrecy, which causes all the local residents to start spinning theories about who she really is.

Helen Graham, for that is how the stranger introduces herself, after some time allows the aforementioned gentleman to read her diary. Very quickly, the blood-curdling events of her past life come to light, especially the story in which she leaves her husband. Unfortunately, one cannot always easily escape from past problems. Often, they chase us, and even more often they catch up.

The author of this novel is Anne Brontë, who with her light pen conveyed an extremely interesting story in an accessible way. This novel does not belong to any series, but its creator has written more than one prose that can be easily associated with this story - all are fast-paced and full of mysteries that await the reader.



Celebration of Women Writers

Anne Brontë

<https://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/bronte/bronte-anne.html>

(☺)(☺)@@@@@☺(☺)



Relatively little is known about Anne Brontë's life. Records indicate where she was and suggest general outlines of what she was doing; her published works suggest something of her experience and beliefs; but few records survive of her daily life and feelings, in her own words or those of witnesses. The few cases in which her own recorded impressions can be compared with those of her sisters, Charlotte and Emily, suggest that their perceptions of Anne are not reliable guides to Anne's feelings. Any biography is a fragile patchwork of facts and possibilities, sewn together with inferences, suppositions, and hopes.

Visit the following Web Links

The Parsonage

First Lessons in the Art of Instruction

The Church

A Few More Lessons

The Parsonage Again

Mirth and Mourning

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Bibliography

<https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/display/document/obo-9780199799558/obo-9780199799558-0027.xml>

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Introduction

After a long period of marginalization within the Brontë family myth, as the quiet and less original one amid sibling geniuses, Anne Brontë (b. 1820–d. 1849) is now well established as a writer to be taken on her own terms. Her two novels and fifty-nine attributed poems show her bold engagement with social, religious, and aesthetic concerns of the early Victorian era. This revised reputation rests much on reappraisals of her best-known work, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848), which was an immediate success, but Brontë's subsequent literary reputation was virtually nil until the late decades of the 20th century. The ubiquitous tendency for over a century to approach the Brontës as a cohesive group, fostered by a fascination with their biographical eccentricities, did no favors for Anne, whose preference for rational realism led many to think her works prosaic in comparison with the heroic, passionate tone of Emily's and Charlotte's writings. Reappraisals of Anne Brontë's work, from the 1950s onward, locate her in a tradition of didactic rationalists, such as Samuel Johnson, Hannah More, and Maria Edgeworth, emphasizing her dissent from the values of romanticism. Her fiction was appreciated for its satiric critique on morals, manners, religion, and education, although comparisons with her sisters continued to reaffirm Anne's status as a

“minor” writer, and a biographical approach to her writings often obscured her art. Feminist critics were slow to take up Anne Brontë, but since the 1990s the treatment of gender in her fiction has been a major focus of criticism, which has placed her in the Enlightenment feminist tradition alongside writers such as Mary Wollstonecraft, Jane Austen, and George Eliot. While the majority of criticism since the 1990s addresses *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, insightful considerations have also emerged of her first novel, *Agnes Grey* (1847), of the poetry, and of her sparse personal writings and artwork. Recurrent themes in criticism of Brontë’s fiction, as well as realism and feminism, are masculinity, education, theological reflection, narrative experimentation, and representations of selfhood and of the female as professional. Attention has also been given to the woman as artist in *The Tenant* and to the significance of animals in *Agnes Grey*. Brontë’s poetry, often discussed comparatively with that of Emily Brontë, has been addressed in terms of masked emotion and conflicted subjectivity (comparable in places with Christina Rossetti) and for its critical engagement with the spiritual ideals of romanticism and with aspects of Victorian Christianity. In the constant flow of publications on the Brontë group, including companions, biographies, essay collections, and the dedicated *Brontë Studies* journal, Anne Brontë’s literary works are now generally well represented.

General Overviews

This section includes critical overviews of Brontë’s oeuvre and some overviews of the works of the Brontës collectively. On Anne Brontë specifically, [Langland 1989](#) is the best starting point. This broadly feminist appraisal of Brontë’s oeuvre is also manifest in [Frawley 1996](#) and [Jay 2000](#). The earlier works listed here, which discuss all three Brontë sisters, distinguish Anne Brontë’s fictional interests and style from her siblings, but they tend to reaffirm her status as a minor writer: [Eagleton 1975](#) frames her work in terms of class; [Craik 1968](#), in terms of rational realism. Of the literary biographies, insightful works are [Winnifrith 1988](#) (cited under [Biography: The Brontë Family](#)) and [Ingham 2006](#). [Harrison and Stanford 1959](#) (cited under [Biography: Anne Brontë](#)) is noteworthy as the first critical engagement with all of Anne Brontë’s writings, although it tends to treat her work as transformed autobiography. [Chitham 1979](#) (cited under [Selected Editions: Poems](#)) includes some useful general material about Brontë’s literary influences. Of works devoted to the Brontës as a group, [Thormählen 2012](#) is the most comprehensive introduction to themes and critical history. [Ingham](#)

[2006](#) is a good introductory overview, while [Glen 2002](#) offers a series of comparative considerations of the works of the Brontës in conversation with each other.

- **Craik, W. A. *The Brontë Novels*. London: Methuen, 1968.**
Eschews a focus on Brontë's life context to consider her kinship with 18th-century writers such as Frances Burney, Maria Edgeworth, and Jane Austen. Presents her as an independent social critic and satirist, creating strong-minded fictional heroines.
- **Eagleton, Terry. *Myths of Power: A Marxist Study of the Brontës*. London: Macmillan, 1975.**
Considers class tensions in the novels, with a clear but rather brief and polemical argument for Brontë's fiction as a straightforward articulation of bourgeois ideology.
- **Frawley, Maria H. *Anne Brontë*. New York: Twayne, 1996.**
Takes self-fashioning and subjectivity as the central themes in an enlightening feminist study of Brontë's fiction and poetry.
- **Glen, Heather, ed. *Cambridge Companion to the Brontës*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002.**
DOI: [10.1017/CCOL0521770270](https://doi.org/10.1017/CCOL0521770270)
References to Anne Brontë appear *passim* (and are indexed) in rather general themed essays, some of which contain valuable comparative discussions of the novels and poetry of the three Brontë sisters.
- **Ingham, Patricia. *The Brontës. Authors in Context*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.**
This volume introduces lives, social context, and writers' treatment of key political/social themes in general terms—under headings such as race, gender, the psyche—and their legacy in popular culture, including a brief discussion of adaptations of *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*. Anne Brontë references are indexed. A good general student companion. Reissued in 2008.
- **Jay, Betty. *Anne Brontë*. Tavistock, UK: Northcote House, 2000.**
After a biographical outline, gives a feminist analysis of the novels and sets Brontë in a specifically female poetic tradition. Useful annotated bibliography.

- **Langland, Elizabeth. *Anne Brontë: The Other One*. Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan Education, 1989.**

DOI: [10.1007/978-1-349-20058-0](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-20058-0)

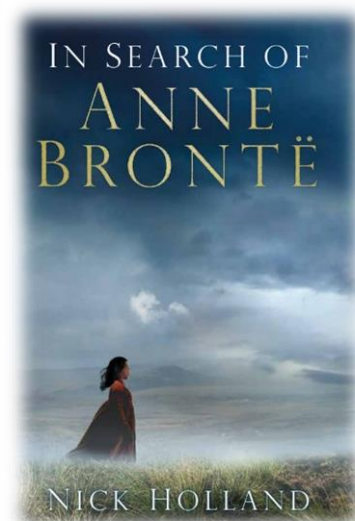
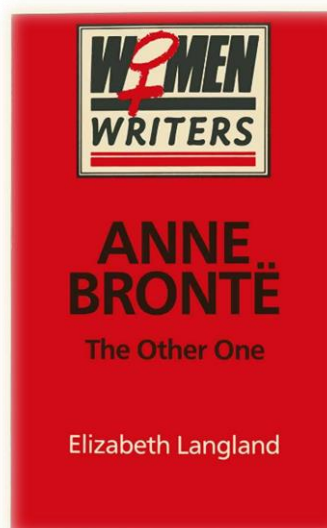
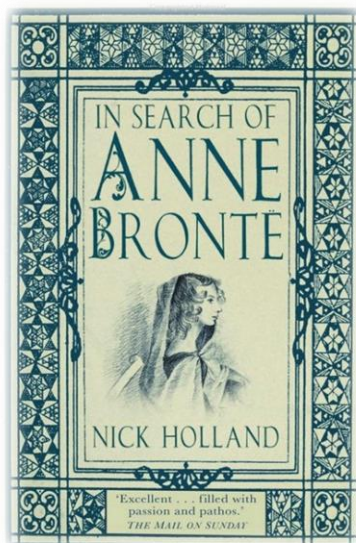
Frames discussion of Brontë's oeuvre in terms of anti-romantic realism and foregrounds "the Woman Question" as a key context to Brontë's fictions of female development. Useful chapter on critical history, with annotated bibliography.

- **Thormählen, Marianne, ed. *The Brontës in Context*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012.**

DOI: [10.1017/CBO9781139028066](https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139028066)

The most comprehensive scholarly companion, containing forty-two essays that explore the sisters' works in relation to social, political, and cultural contexts. Includes essays on biography, print culture, responses, critical trends, and themes. Selected essays are listed in subsections of [Criticism](#) in this article.

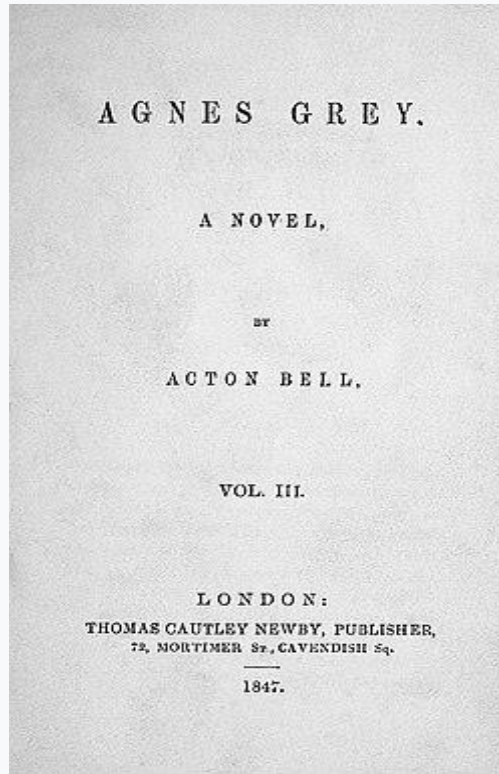
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Agnes Grey

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agnes_Grey

Agnes Grey



Title page of the first edition, 1847. [Wuthering Heights](#) by [Emily Brontë](#) took up the first two volumes of the edition.

Author	Anne Brontë
Language	English
Genre	Romance novel
Set in	Northern England , mid-19th century
Publisher	Thomas Cautley Newby
Publication date	24 November 1847
Publication place	United Kingdom
Media type	Print: hardback octavo
Dewey Decimal	823.8
LC Class	PR4162 .A54
Followed by	The Tenant of Wildfell Hall

Agnes Grey, A Novel is the [first novel](#) by English author [Anne Brontë](#) (writing under the pen name of "Acton Bell"), first published in December 1847, and republished in a second edition in 1850. The novel follows Agnes Grey, a [governess](#), as she works within families of the English gentry. Scholarship and comments by Anne's sister [Charlotte Brontë](#) suggest the novel is largely based on Anne Brontë's own experiences as a governess for five years. Like her sister Charlotte's 1847 novel [Jane Eyre](#), it addresses what the precarious position of governess entailed and how it affected a young woman.

The choice of central character allows Anne to deal with issues of oppression, abuse of women and governesses, isolation, and ideas of empathy. An additional theme is the fair treatment of animals. *Agnes Grey* also mimics some of the stylistic approaches of a [bildungsroman](#), employing ideas of personal growth and coming of age.

The [Irish novelist George Moore](#) praised *Agnes Grey* as "the most perfect prose narrative in English letters," and went so far as to compare Anne's prose to that of [Jane Austen](#). Modern critics have made more subdued claims admiring *Agnes Grey* with a less overt praise of Brontë's work than Moore.

Background and publication

The genesis of *Agnes Grey* was attributed by Edward Chitham to the reflections on life found in Anne's diary of 31 July 1845.

It is likely that Anne was the first of the Brontë sisters to write a work of prose for publication, although *Agnes Grey*, [Wuthering Heights](#), and [Jane Eyre](#) were all published within the same year: 1847. Anne's novel was eventually published by Thomas Newby in a triple-volume format: Emily's *Wuthering Heights* made up the first two volumes (by virtue of it being the longer), while *Agnes Grey* made up the third.

The original edition of *Agnes Grey*, published in 1847, had numerous orthographic, punctuation, and other issues attributed to neglect by the publisher Newby. However, the second edition, published in 1850, had many changes after the careful editing of [Charlotte Brontë](#).

Plot

Agnes Grey is the daughter of Mr. Grey, a minister of modest means, and Mrs. Grey, a woman who left her wealthy family and married purely out of love. Mr. Grey tries to increase the family's financial standing, but the merchant he entrusts his money to dies in a wreck, and the lost investment plunges the family into debt.

Agnes, her sister Mary, and their mother all try to keep expenses low and bring in extra money, but Agnes is frustrated that everyone treats her like a child. To prove herself and to earn money, she is determined to get a

position as a governess. Eventually, she obtains a recommendation from a well-placed acquaintance, is offered a position, and secures her parents' permission. With some misgivings, she travels to Wellwood house to work for the Bloomfield family.

The Bloomfields are rich and much crueller than Agnes had expected. Mrs. Bloomfield spoils her children while Mr. Bloomfield constantly finds fault with Agnes's work. The children are unruly and Agnes is held accountable for them despite being given no real authority over them. Tom, the oldest Bloomfield child, is particularly abusive and even tortures small animals. In less than a year, Agnes is relieved of her position, since Mrs. Bloomfield thinks that her children are not learning quickly enough. Agnes returns home.

She then begs her mother to help her find a new situation. Agnes advertises and is given a position in an even wealthier family – the Murrays. The two boys, John and Charles, are both sent to school soon after her arrival, but the girls Rosalie and Matilda remain her charges. Matilda is a tomboy and Rosalie is a flirt. Both girls are selfish and sometimes unpleasant, and although Agnes's position is slightly better than it was at Wellwood house, she is frequently ignored or used in the girls' schemes.

Agnes begins to visit Nancy Brown, an old woman with poor eyesight who needs help reading the Bible; there Agnes meets the new curate, Mr. Edward Weston. The next day while on a walk Agnes is surprised by Mr. Weston, who picks some wild primroses for her. Agnes later saves one of the flowers in her Bible. She learns that his mother has died not long ago. This new friendship is noticed by Rosalie Murray, who has now entered into society and is a favourite with nearly all suitors in the county.

Rosalie becomes engaged to Sir Thomas Ashby, a wealthy baronet from Ashby Park. She tells Agnes, but makes her promise to keep silent, as she is still going to flirt with other men before she is married. One day, she and Agnes go on a walk and meet Mr. Weston. Rosalie begins to flirt with him, much to Agnes's chagrin.

Agnes receives a note from her sister Mary, who is now married to Mr. Richardson, a parson of a rectory near their home. Mary warns that their father is dying and begs Agnes to come. Agnes arrives too late to see her father alive. After his funeral, Agnes opens a small school with her mother, leaving behind the Murrays and Mr. Weston.

She receives a letter from Rosalie who is very unhappy in her marriage and asks Agnes to come for a visit. Agnes is shocked by the change in Rosalie from a merry girl to an unhappy young woman. Rosalie confides that she despises Sir Thomas Ashby (and her mother-in-law), and claims he only left London because he was jealous of all the gentlemen she was attracting. Agnes also hears that Mr. Weston has left the area, and she grieves, believing she will not be able to see him again.

Agnes leaves Ashby Park and returns home. Several months after she arrives, she goes for a walk on the sea shore and encounters Mr. Weston, who had been looking for her since he moved to the nearby parsonage.

He is introduced to Agnes's mother, and they forge a bond. Agnes finds her attraction to him growing, and she accepts when he proposes marriage. In the end, Agnes is very happy having married Edward Weston, and they have three children together.

Characters

- **Agnes Grey**—Main protagonist and narrator of the story. She is the younger daughter of Richard Grey, and is determined to take care of herself, to save trouble for her mother.
- **Edward Weston**—A country parson whom Agnes meets while visiting the poor near the Murray's estate. He and Agnes fall in love, but Agnes believes that he loves the beautiful Rosalie Murray. In the end, he and Agnes marry.
- **Richard Grey**—Agnes' father, a poor parson who loses his patrimony in a disastrous speculation which ruined his health.
- **Alice Grey**—Agnes' mother, a lady who left her family to marry Richard Grey, and who opens a school with Agnes after her husband's death.
- **Mary Grey**—Agnes' sister who later marries a parson, Mr. Richardson.
- **Mrs. Bloomfield**—Mistress of Wellwood. Agnes' first employer, she is convinced that her incorrigible children are really very good, and that Agnes is a bad example to them.
- **Mr. Bloomfield**—Master of Wellwood. He is convinced that Agnes is not competent, and as a result, often watches her, scolding her for the misbehavior of the children, which she could not prevent.
- **Matilda Murray**—The younger daughter of the Murray family. She is a tom-boy who has learned to swear from her father and the outdoors servant men. She does not want to learn anything, but is forced to by Agnes' being there. She is very fond of horses and wants more than anything to go hunting with her father.
- **Rosalie Ashby (formerly Rosalie Murray)**—The oldest Murray child, who makes Agnes a sort of confidant. She is a selfish girl who flirts with any man she comes in contact with. She is jealous of Agnes because of Edward Weston, even though she told Agnes that Mr. Weston was an "ugly blockhead." She marries Sir Thomas Ashby because he is rich and has a title, and she adores Ashby Park. She later regrets her marriage, and becomes closer to Agnes.
- **John Murray**—Older of the two Murray boys. He is sent to school about a year after Agnes comes to be his family's governess.
- **Charles Murray**—The younger of the two Murray boys. He is sent to school about two years after Agnes comes to the Murray household.
- **Mr. Murray**—Agnes's second employer. He is often out hunting, and has taught his daughter, Matilda to swear.

- **Mrs. Murray**—Agnes's second employer's wife. She is a fashionable, showy woman who wants her daughters to marry well. Matilda drives her crazy because of her tom-boy ways. She convinces Rosalie that Lord Ashby's character is not as bad as is reported.
- **Sir Thomas Ashby**—Rosalie's husband. He has a terrible character, which Rosalie knows about when she marries him. While he is always talking about different women, he gets furious and jealous if Rosalie mentions one other man.
- **Mr. Hatfield**—Rector near the Murray's estate. He has an attraction to Rosalie because of her fortune, and she flirts with him for a while. When he proposes, she laughs at him, and he ends up marrying a rich older woman.
- **Nancy Brown**—An older woman whom Agnes befriends. In her house, Agnes and Mr. Weston meet. She is a great admirer of Mr. Weston's.
- **Tom Bloomfield**—The oldest Bloomfield child. He is cruel to animals, something Agnes tries to stop, but fails as he is encouraged by his parents and his uncle.
- **Mr. Richardson**—A middle-aged parson. He marries Mary Grey.

Style

Agnes Grey has a "perfect" and simple prose style which moves forward gently but does not produce a sense of monotony. George Moore suggested that it conveyed a style with "all the qualities of Jane Austen and other qualities". Her style is considered both witty and apt for subtlety and irony.

Stevie Davies points to the intellectual wit behind the text:

The genuineness of texture and dialogue in *Agnes Grey* is the product of minute observations, focused by a fine authorial irony and delicate power of understatement.

Genre

Cates Baldridge describes *Agnes Grey* as a novel which "takes great pains to announce itself as a [bildungsroman](#)" but in fact never allows its character to grow up or transform for ideological reasons. Baldridge says the early emphasis on Agnes' bourgeois upbringing allows the reader to form the supposition that the transformative bourgeois class will develop an ideal person of virtue. However, Agnes stalls in her development because of the corrupted nature of the household in which she is employed. As a result, she becomes a static member of the bourgeois, ambivalent to the Victorian value of moral transformation in virtue.

Autobiographical novel

Agnes Grey is also an autobiographical novel with strong parallels between its events and Anne's own life as a governess; indeed, according to Charlotte Brontë, the story of Agnes largely stemmed from Anne's own experiences as a governess. Like Agnes, "dear, gentle" Anne was the

youngest child of a poor clergyman. In April 1839, she took up a position as a governess with the Ingham family of Blake Hall, [Mirfield](#), in Yorkshire, about 20 miles away from Haworth, to whom the Bloomfields bear some resemblance. One of the more memorable scenes from the novel, in which Agnes kills a group of birds to save them from being tortured by Tom Bloomfield, was taken from an actual incident. In December 1839, Anne, like Agnes, was dismissed.

Anne found a post at Thorp Green, [Little Ouseburn](#), near York, around 70 miles away, just as Agnes' second position is further from home, with older pupils—Lydia Robinson, 15. Elizabeth, 13, and Mary, 12. There was also a son, Edmund, who was eight when Anne began working there in the spring of 1840. Anne's brother [Branwell](#) became his tutor in January 1843. The fictional Murrays of Horton Lodge echo the Robinsons; like the "dashing" Mrs. Murray, who "certainly required neither rouge nor padding to add to her charms", Mrs. Lydia Robinson was a handsome woman of 40 when Anne came to Thorp Green.

[Stevie Davies](#) remarks that *Agnes Grey* could be called a "Protestant spiritual autobiography". First, the book retains a sober tone, and Agnes displays a very strong Puritan personality reflected in her name. [Agnes](#) is derived from the Greek for chaste, *hagne*, and Grey commonly is associated with "Quakers and quietists to express radical dissociation from gaudy worldiness".

F. B. Pinion is of the opinion that *Agnes Grey* "is almost certainly a fictionalized adaptation of *Passages in the Life of an Individual*". However, he also points to several sections that are "wholly fictitious":

the opening and Agnes's return home after failure in her first post; the love story which develops during her second period as a governess; the marriage and disillusionment of Rosalie Murray; and, above all, the happy ending.

Themes

Social instruction

Throughout *Agnes Grey*, Agnes is able to return to her mother for instruction when the rest of her life becomes rough. F. B. Pinion identifies this impulse to return home with a desire in Anne to provide instruction for society. Pinion quotes Anne's belief that "All good histories contain instruction" when he makes this argument. He says that Anne felt that she could "Reveal life as it is...[so that] right and wrong will be clear in a discerning reader without sermonizing." Her discussion of oppression of governesses, and in turn women, can be understood from this perspective.

Oppression

Events representative of cruel treatment of governesses and of women recur throughout *Agnes Grey*. Additionally, Brontë depicts scenes of cruelty

towards animals, as well as degrading treatment of Agnes. Parallels have been drawn between the oppression of these two groups—animals and females—that are "beneath" the upper-class human male. To Anne, the treatment of animals reflected on the character of the person. This theme of oppression provided social commentary, likely based on Anne's experiences. Twenty years after its publication Lady Amberly commented that "I should like to give it to every family with a governess and shall read it through again when I have a governess to remind me to be human."

Animals

Beyond the treatment of animals, Anne carefully describes the actions and expressions of animals. Stevie Davies observes that this acuity of examination along with the moral reflection on the treatment of animals suggests that, for Anne, "animals are fellow beings with an ethical claim on human protection."

Empathy

Agnes tries to impart to her charges the ability to empathise with others. This is especially evident in her conversations with Rosalie Murray, whose careless treatment of the men who love her upsets Agnes.

Isolation

Maria H. Frawley notes that Agnes is isolated from a young age. She comes from a "rural heritage" and her mother brings up her sister and herself away from society. Once Agnes has become a governess, she becomes more isolated by the large distance from her family and further alienation by her employers. Agnes does not resist the isolation, but instead uses the opportunity for self-study and personal development.

Critical reception

Agnes Grey was popular during what remained of Anne Brontë's life despite the belief of many critics at the time that the novel was marred by "coarseness" and "vulgarity," but it lost some of its popularity afterwards because of its perceived moralising. However, in the 20th century, there was an increase in examination by scholars of *Agnes Grey* and of Anne Brontë. In *Conversation in Ebury Street*, the Irish novelist [George Moore](#) provided a commonly cited example of these newer reviews, overtly praising the style of the novel. F. B. Pinion agreed to a large extent that *Agnes Grey* was a masterwork. However, Pinion felt that Moore's examination of the piece was a little extreme and that his "preoccupation with style must have blinded him to the persistence of her moral purpose" of *Agnes Grey*.

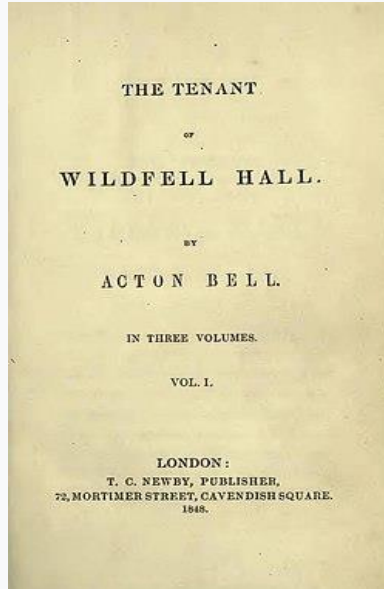
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The Tenant of Wildfell Hall

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Tenant_of_Wildfell_Hall

The Tenant of Wildfell Hall



Title page of the first edition, 1848

Author	Anne Brontë (as "Acton Bell")
Language	English
Genre	Epistolary novel , social criticism
Publisher	Thomas Cautley Newby
Publication date	24 June 1848 ^[1]
Publication place	United Kingdom
Media type	Print (Hardcover)
Pages	3 vols: 358, 366, 342
OCLC	162118830
Dewey Decimal	823.8
LC Class	PR4162 .T4
Preceded by	Agnes Grey
Text	The Tenant of Wildfell Hall at Wikisource

The Tenant of Wildfell Hall is the second and final novel written by English author [Anne Brontë](#). It was first published in [1848](#) under the [pseudonym](#) Acton Bell. Probably the most shocking of the Brontës' novels, it had an instant and phenomenal success, but after Anne's death her sister [Charlotte](#) prevented its re-publication in England until 1854.

The novel is [framed as a series of letters](#) from Gilbert Markham to a friend about the events connected with his meeting a mysterious young widow, calling herself Helen Graham, who arrives with her young son and a servant to Wildfell Hall, an [Elizabethan mansion](#) which has been empty for many years. Contrary to the early 19th-century norms, she pursues an artist's career and makes an income by selling her pictures. Her strict seclusion soon gives rise to gossip in the neighbouring village and she becomes a social outcast. Gilbert comes to understand that she has fled with her son, whom she desperately wishes to save from his father's influence. The depiction of marital strife and women's professional work is mitigated by the strong moral message of Anne Brontë's belief in [universal salvation](#).

Most critics now consider *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* to be one of the first [feminist](#) novels. Writer and suffragist [May Sinclair](#), in 1913, said that "the slamming of [Helen's] bedroom door against her husband reverberated throughout Victorian England". In leaving her husband and taking away their child, Helen violates not only social conventions but also early 19th-century English law.

Background

Some aspects of the life and character of the author's brother [Branwell Brontë](#) correspond to those of Helen's husband Arthur Huntingdon in *The Tenant*. He resembles Branwell Brontë in three ways: physical good-looks; sexual adventures (before his affair with his employer's wife, Mrs Robinson, Branwell is thought to have fathered an [illegitimate](#) child who died at birth; and especially in his [alcoholism](#). Another character in the novel, Lord Lowborough, has an association with opium that may also reflect Branwell's behaviour.

Another possible source for *The Tenant* is the story of Mrs Collins, the wife of a local curate, who in November 1840 came to Anne's father [Patrick Brontë](#) seeking advice regarding her alcoholic husband's abusive conduct. Mr Brontë's counsel was that she should leave her husband. Mrs Collins returned to [Haworth](#) in the spring of 1847, while Anne was writing *The Tenant*, and told how she had managed to build a new life for herself and her two children.

Locations



Blake Hall photographed at the end of the 19th century

The Brontë biographer [Winifred Gérin](#) believed that the original of Wildfell Hall was [Ponden Hall](#), a farmhouse near [Stanbury](#) in [West Yorkshire](#). Ponden shares certain architectural details with Wildfell, including latticed windows and a central portico with a date plaque above.

Blake Hall at [Mirfield](#), where Anne had been employed as a governess, was suggested as the model for Grassdale Manor, Arthur Huntingdon's country seat, by [Ellen Nussey](#), a friend of Charlotte Brontë, to Edward Morison Wimperis, an artist commissioned to illustrate the Brontë sisters' novels in 1872. However, neither Blake Hall nor Thorpe Green, another house where Anne was employed as a governess, corresponds exactly with Grassdale.

Linden-Car, the village that Wildfell Hall stands close to, is in [Yorkshire](#). [Car](#) in northern dialect means pool, pond or low-lying and boggy ground. Also mentioned is Lindenhope, where [hope](#) in Northeastern English means a small enclosed valley.

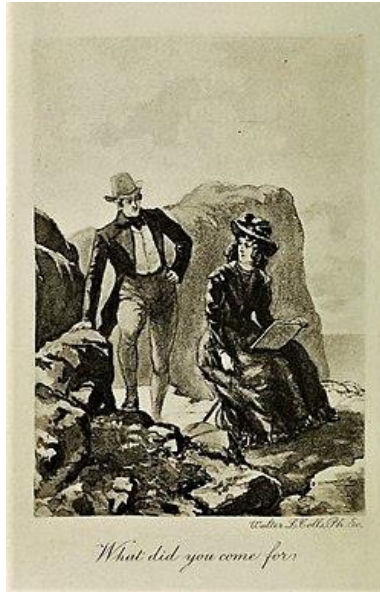


Wildfell Hall, as depicted by [Edmund Morison Wimperis](#)

Plot summary

The novel is divided into three volumes.

Part One (Chapters 1 to 15) is narrated by farmer Gilbert Markham as a letter to his friend Jack Halford, beginning with an account of how a mysterious widow, Mrs Helen Graham, arrives at Wildfell Hall, a nearby mansion. A source of curiosity for the small community, the reticent Mrs Graham and her young son, Arthur, are slowly drawn into the social circles of the village. Initially, Gilbert casually courts vicar's daughter Eliza Millward, despite his mother's belief that he can do better. His interest in Eliza wanes as he comes to know Mrs Graham. In retribution, Eliza spreads (and perhaps creates) scandalous rumours about Mrs Graham. With gossip flying, Gilbert is led to believe that his friend Frederick Lawrence is courting Mrs Graham. At a chance meeting on a road, Gilbert strikes the mounted Mr Lawrence with a whip handle, causing him to fall from his horse. Though she is unaware of this confrontation, Mrs Graham still refuses to marry Gilbert, but when he accuses her of loving Mr Lawrence, she gives him her diaries.



Helen and Gilbert by Walter L. Colls

Part two (Chapters 16 to 44) is taken from Helen's diaries, in which she describes her marriage to Arthur Huntingdon. The handsome, witty Huntingdon is also spoilt, selfish and self-indulgent. Before marrying Helen, he flirts with Annabella Wilmot, and uses this to manipulate Helen and convince her to marry him. Helen, blinded by love, marries him, and resolves to reform him with gentle persuasion and good example. After the birth of their only child, also called Arthur, Huntingdon becomes increasingly jealous of their son and his claims on Helen's attentions and affections.

Huntingdon's pack of dissolute friends frequently engage in drunken revels at the family's home, Grassdale, oppressing those of finer character. Both men and women are portrayed as degraded. In particular, Annabella, now Lady Lowborough, is shown to be unfaithful to her melancholic but devoted husband.

Walter Hargrave, the brother of Helen's friend Milicent Hargrave, vies for Helen's affections. While he is not as wild as his peers, he is an unwelcome admirer and Helen senses his predatory nature. Mr Hargrave informs Helen of Huntingdon's affair with Lady Lowborough. When his friends depart, Huntingdon pines openly for his paramour and derides his wife, but he will not grant her a divorce.

Huntingdon's corruption of their son – encouraging him to drink and swear at his tender age – is the last straw for Helen. She plans to flee to save her son, but her husband learns of her plans from her diary and burns the artist's tools with which she had hoped to support herself. Eventually, with help from her brother, Mr Lawrence, and her servant, Rachel, Helen escapes and finds a secret refuge at Wildfell Hall.

Part Three (Chapters 45 to 53) continues Gilbert's letter to Mr Halford after reading of the diaries. Helen bids Gilbert to leave her because she is not free to marry. He complies and soon learns that she has returned to Grassdale because her husband is gravely ill. Helen's ministrations are in vain, and Huntingdon's death is painful since he is fraught with terror at what awaits him. Helen cannot comfort him, for he rejects responsibility for his actions and wishes instead for her to come with him to plead for his salvation.

A year passes. Gilbert pursues a rumour of Helen's impending wedding, only to find that Mr Lawrence, with whom he has reconciled, is marrying Helen's friend Esther Hargrave. Gilbert goes to Grassdale, and discovers that Helen is now wealthy and lives at her estate in Staningley. He travels there, but is plagued by anxiety that she is now far above his station. By chance he encounters Helen, her aunt and young Arthur. The two lovers reconcile and marry.

Characters

Helen and her family



Annabella Milbanke, a possible real-life inspiration for Helen Graham

- **Helen "Nell" Huntingdon (née Lawrence)**, known also under her alias **Helen Graham** (Graham is her mother's [maiden name](#)), the protagonist of the novel and the tenant of the title. Wildfell Hall is the place where she and her brother were born. After their mother's death she goes to live with their aunt and uncle at Staningley Manor, while her brother, Frederick, remains with their father. In spite of their separation, Helen has maintained an affectionate relationship with her brother and later he helps her to escape from her abusive and dissolute husband. The character of Helen Graham was probably inspired by [Anna Isabella Milbanke](#), the wife of [Lord Byron](#). Like Anna, Helen firstly believed that reforming her husband's behaviour was her religious obligation. Despite disillusionment, both women retained their [Universalist](#) faith.
- **Master Arthur Huntingdon**, five years old at the beginning of the book, the son of Arthur and Helen Huntingdon. He has a resemblance to his uncle, Frederick, which gives rise to gossip. He is grown up by the time of Gilbert's letter to Jack Halford, and is residing at Grassdale Manor with his wife, Helen Hattersley (the daughter of Milicent Hargrave and Ralph Hattersley).

- **Mr Maxwell**, Helen's wealthy uncle, dies near the end of the novel and leaves Staningley to Helen.
- **Margaret "Peggy" Maxwell**, Helen's aunt, tries to warn her against marrying Huntingdon. She dies several years after Helen's and Gilbert's marriage.
- **Frederick Lawrence**, Helen's brother, helps her to escape from Huntingdon and lends her money. As he and Helen grew up apart and only met in Staningley or Grassdale, no one in Linden-Car village guessed that the secretive Mrs Graham is actually Frederick's sister. Eventually he marries Esther Hargrave. Being in mourning for her husband, Helen is forced to miss her brother's wedding.

Huntingdon and his circle

- **Arthur Huntingdon**, Helen's abusive and alcoholic husband, is a [Byronic](#) figure of great fascination but also of barely concealed moral failings. His abusive behaviour impels Helen to run away from him, but nevertheless when he becomes ill (after the injury from falling from a horse when drunk), Helen returns to Grassdale to take care of him. Unwilling to stop drinking alcohol, Huntingdon deteriorates in health and eventually dies. He is widely thought to be loosely based on the author's brother, [Branwell](#), but some critics have argued that they have very little in common. Along with Lord Lowborough, Huntingdon bears far stronger resemblance to two types of drunkards outlined in [Robert Macnish's](#) *The Anatomy of Drunkenness*.
- **Annabella Wilmot**, later Lady Lowborough, Arthur Huntingdon's paramour, is flirtatious, bold and exquisitely beautiful. She has an affair with Huntingdon for several years. Helen is forced to put up with the affair, but when Annabella's husband discovers it, he obtains a divorce. Gilbert says he hears that after Annabella moves to the continent, she falls into poverty and dies destitute and alone, but stresses he cannot be sure if this is true or merely a rumour.
- **Lord Lowborough**, a friend of Huntingdon's and Annabella's husband, is apathetic but devoted. [Melancholic](#), dour and gloomy, he is in complete contrast to Huntingdon. He used to gamble and drink too much alcohol and developed an addiction to opium, but, after his financial ruin, gradually reforms himself. Lowborough truly loves Annabella, and her infidelity brings him such suffering that only his Christian faith and strong will keep him from [suicide](#). Later he divorces her and after some time marries a plain middle-aged woman, who makes a good wife to him and a stepmother to his children with Annabella – a son and a daughter (who, it is implied, is Huntingdon's). Lord Lowborough also has some resemblances to Branwell, such as a life of debauchery, periods of remorse/religious torments, and opium, as well as moral weakness.
- **Ralph Hattersley**, a friend of Huntingdon's, marries Milicent Hargrave because he wants a quiet wife who will let him do what he likes with no word of reproach or complaint. He mistreats his wife. "I sometimes think she has no feeling at all; and then I go on until she cries – and that satisfies

me," he tells Helen. But after he reforms himself he becomes a loving husband and father.

- **Mr Grimsby**, another of Arthur's friends, is a [misogynist](#). He helps Arthur to conceal his affair with Annabella.

Inhabitants of Linden-Car Farm

- **Gilbert Markham**, a twenty-four-year-old farmer, is the principal narrator in the novel. He exhibits jealousy, moodiness and anger, but during the course of the novel he grows morally and proves to be worthy of Helen.
- **Fergus Markham**, Gilbert's seventeen-year-old brother, is high-spirited and idle, and often tries but fails to be witty.
- **Rose Markham**, a clever and pretty girl of 19, is Gilbert's younger sister and a friend of the Millward sisters. She becomes the wife of Jack Halford, to whom Gilbert is recounting in letters what happened 20 years prior in his youth.
- **Mrs Markham**, Gilbert's mother, is a great admirer of the Reverend Millward and his ideas.

Inhabitants of Ryecote Farm

- **Jane Wilson**, a friend of Eliza Millward and a scandalmonger, tries to ensnare Frederick Lawrence, but when Gilbert reveals to him her hatred of Frederick's sister Helen, Frederick breaks off their relationship. As no man she meets fits her high standards, she moves to a nearby country town, constantly name dropping, but friendless and, according to Helen, becomes a bitter spinster.
- **Richard Wilson**, Jane's brother, succeeds the Reverend Millward in the vicarage of Lindenhope and eventually marries his daughter, the plain Mary.
- **Robert Wilson**, brother to Jane and Richard, is a rough farmer whom Jane is ashamed of. However, everyone else approves of him as being pleasant and kind. He eventually marries, and Jane leaves the family home as she cannot stand him and his ordinary wife.
- **Mrs Wilson**, the mother of Jane, Richard and Robert, is a gossip like her daughter.

Inhabitants of the Vicarage

- **Eliza Millward**, daughter of the vicar and friend of Jane Wilson, is a scandalmonger. Gilbert carries on a half-serious flirtation with her before he first meets Helen.
- **Mary Millward**, Eliza's elder sister, is a plain, quiet, sensible girl, housekeeper and family drudge. She is trusted and valued by her father, loved and courted by children and poor people, dogs and cats, and slighted and neglected by everybody else.
- **The Reverend Michael Millward**, Eliza's and Mary's father, is a man of fixed principles, strong prejudices and regular habits. He considers anyone who disagrees with his views deplorably ignorant.

Inhabitants of The Grove

- **Walter Hargrave**, a friend of Arthur Huntingdon's, is a predatory admirer of Helen while she is still living with her husband. He is a cousin of Annabella Wilmot.
- **Milicent Hargrave**, a meek woman, married to Ralph Hattersley against her will, is Walter's sister and Helen's close friend. Milicent can be seen as a [foil](#) to her.^[9] While Helen is spirited and forthright, unafraid to speak to the men in her life with frankness, Milicent, in contrast, is trampled and ignored by her husband. Helen eventually leaves Huntingdon with her beloved son in tow, while Milicent says that she is "really contented" with her husband and "would not exchange [him] for any man on earth". At length, Ralph finally reforms himself and Milicent finds happiness in marriage.
- **Esther Hargrave**, the younger sister of Milicent and Walter, and Helen's friend, is bold, high-spirited and independent. She resists an arranged marriage her family tries to force her into and eventually marries Helen's brother, Frederick Lawrence.
- **Mrs Hargrave**, mother of the three Hargrave children, is a hard and stingy woman. She adores her only son and tries to marry off her daughters as soon as possible.

Other characters

- **Mr Boarham**, one of Helen's suitors before her marriage, is rejected because Helen is repelled by his dull conversation and age. Helen prefers to spell his name "Bore'em".
- **Mr Wilmot**, the uncle of Annabella Wilmot, is another of Helen's early suitors. She considers him a scoundrel.
- **Rachel**, a servant and friend of Helen and her son, has taken care of Helen since her birth.
- **Alice Myers**, another paramour of the elder Huntingdon, is hired ostensibly as a [governess](#) for little Arthur. Helen is suspicious of her from the start (all the families she has previously worked for have conveniently gone abroad), and when Rachel gives her certain proof that Alice is having an affair with her husband, she decides to flee.
- **Benson**, the butler at Grassdale Manor, has compassion for Helen in her misfortune and helps her escape.
- **Jack Halford**, a [squire](#), is the husband of Rose Markham and the addressee of Gilbert's letters. He is an [unseen character](#).

Timeline

The novel begins in 1847, but flashes back to the period from 1821 to 1830 before returning.

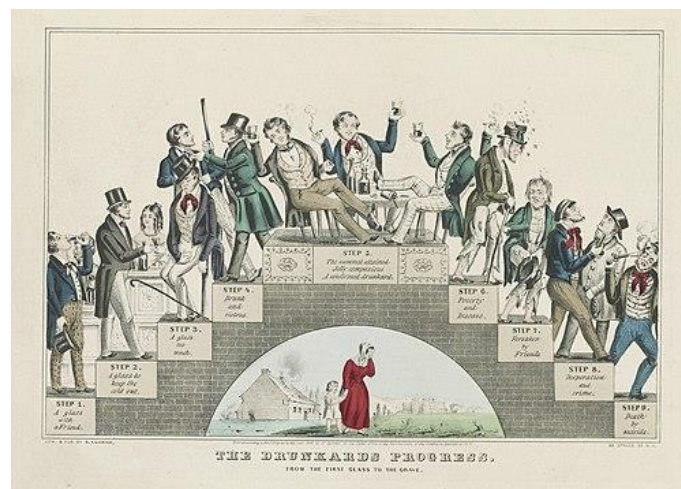
- 1792/3 Arthur Huntingdon born.
- 1802/3 Helen Lawrence born at Wildfell Hall; Gilbert Markham born.

- 1821 The beginning of Helen's diary (1 June). She is back from her first season in London where she met Huntingdon. Wedding of Helen and Huntingdon (20 December).
- 1822 Helen reports the birth of her son, named also Arthur (5 December).
- 1824 Helen reveals Huntingdon's affair with Annabella (7 October).
- 1827 Helen flees to Wildfell Hall with Rachel and little Arthur (24 October).
- 1828 Helen goes back to Grassdale to take care of Huntingdon (4 November); Huntingdon dies (5 December).
- 1830 Gilbert and Helen are married (August).
- 1847 Gilbert ends his letter to Jack Halford and the narrative (10 June).

Literary analysis

Themes

Alcoholism



The Drunkard's Progress, lithograph by Nathaniel Currier supporting the temperance movement

Arthur Huntingdon and most of his male friends are heavy drinkers. Lord Lowborough is "the drunkard by necessity" – he tries to use alcohol as a way to cope with his personal problems. Arthur, like his friend Ralph Hattersley, is the "drunkard from an excess of indulgence in youth". Ultimately, only Ralph Hattersley and Lord Lowborough manage to reform their lives. Arthur and Lord Lowborough particularly seem affected by the traditional signs of alcoholism. They frequently drink themselves into incoherence and on awakening, they drink again to feel better. Lord Lowborough understands that he has a problem and, with willpower and strenuous effort, overcomes his addiction. Arthur continues drinking even after he injures himself falling from a horse, which eventually leads to his death. Ralph, although he drinks heavily with his friends, does not seem to be as much afflicted by alcoholism as by his way of life. Mr Grimsby continues his degradation, going from bad to worse and eventually dying in a brawl. Huntingdon's son Arthur becomes fond of alcohol through his father's efforts, but Helen begins to add to his wine a small quantity of [tartar emetic](#), "just enough to produce inevitable nausea and depression without positive sickness". Very soon the boy begins to be made to feel ill by the very smell of alcohol.

Domestic violence

Marianne Thormählen calls Milicent's remark to her drunk and abusive husband Ralph, reminding him that they are not at home, "one of the most harrowing sentences in the entire novel". Thormählen argues that in *The Tenant* the traditional submissive behaviour of wives is shown as a factor that encourages male oppression. Later, when Ralph decides to reform his life, he blames his wife's meekness and says that resistance from her would have prevented his violence and debauchery.^[11]

Gender relations



Hannah More's belief in the "moral superiority" of women had strongly influenced Victorian domestic ideology.

In discussing Brontë's narrative strategy, Carol N. Senf compares *The Tenant* with [Margaret Atwood's](#) *Handmaid's Tale*: in both novels female narrative is retold by a man. Brontë, like Atwood, "makes the reader wonder whether any two individuals could achieve the kind of equal relationship Gilbert seems to desire in a society that encourages inequality. Certainly, Helen's silence is in some ways as troubling to twentieth-century readers as Offred's, though Gilbert is much kinder and more thoughtful about his superior position than [Professor] Pieixoto."

According to Priti Joshi, in *The Tenant* Anne challenges the central tenet of 19th-century domestic ideology – women's influence on men – famously postulated by [Hannah More](#). This doctrine found its way into even "protofeminist" novels such as *Jane Eyre*, where the main heroine fulfills (or reduces) her ambitions for a wider life by taming and managing her husband. In *The Tenant*, however, masculinity is impervious to the softening or "superior" influence of women. Marrying Arthur, Helen is convinced that she can reform him, but six years later she escapes from him to protect herself and her young son. Helen's second husband, Gilbert Markham, who despite many faults is "more pliable", never shows any noticeable reform throughout the novel. Joshi concludes that Gilbert is "tottering toward a new form of masculinity" together with Jack Halford, his close friend, by exchanging confidences and, by learning to communicate and reveal emotions, doing what is considered to be feminine, he can redeem himself, become a new man and a worthy husband of Helen.

Of all Arthur's friends, only Walter Hargrave has never been a heavy drinker. He uses this as manipulation in an attempt to win Helen's favour. When it doesn't work, he

starts speculating that she cannot manage her life after leaving Arthur without a man's protection and supervision.

Gilbert's mother, Mrs Markham, holds the doctrine prevailing at the time that it is "the husband's business to please himself, and hers [i.e. the wife's] to please him". The portrayal of Helen, courageous and independent, emphasizes her capacity for seeking autonomy rather than submitting to male authority, and the corrective role of women in relation to men. *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* is thus considered a feminist novel by many critics.

Displacement

Josephine McDonagh believes that the theme of displacement is underlined by the title of the novel: Helen is the tenant, not an owner-occupier, of Wildfell Hall, the place of her birth, which was bequeathed to a male descendant, her brother. *The Tenant* features numerous allusions to a wide range of other texts, from the [Bible](#) to contemporary novels. Apart from being used as a quotation, allusions are often applied by peculiar characters to reflect their personalities. Sometimes the individual voices of characters are shown as a patchwork of quotations. Such "borrowed voices" may denote the displacement of the main heroes – Gilbert, being a well-educated man with high ambitions for some "great achievements", is forced to take over his father's farm, and Helen, being a runaway wife, can call neither her home nor her name her own. The emphasis on allusions in the novel, on using the "language of others", according to McDonagh, may be a reflection on the position of being a tenant, which in its subjugation is similar to that of being a wife.

Marriage



Portrait of an English married couple, circa 1780

Until the passing of the [Married Women's Property Act](#) in 1870 a wife had no independent existence under English law, and therefore no right to own property or

to enter into contracts separately from her husband, or to sue for divorce, or for the control and custody of her children. As expressed in [Hugo Black's](#) dissent in [United States v. Yazell](#), "This rule [coverture] has worked out in reality to mean that though the husband and wife are one, the one is the husband."

Helen is misled by ideas of romantic love and duty into the delusion that she can repair her husband's conduct. Hattersley declares that he wants a pliant wife who will not interfere with his fun, but the truth is that he really wants quite the opposite. Milicent cannot resist her mother's pressure, so she marries Ralph against her will. Wealthy Annabella wants only a title, while Lord Lowborough devotedly loves her. The social climber Jane Wilson seeks wealth.

Motherhood

Helen escapes from her husband, in violation of English law as it then was, not for her own sake but for young Arthur's. She wants to "obviate his becoming such a gentleman as his father".

Woman artist



Self-portrait – one form of artist's self-identification

According to [Stevie Davies](#), Anne's depiction of the woman as fee-earning artist "trebly trespasses on the domain of the masculine: female artists dabbed in water-colours or sketched decoratively in pen and ink; ladies did not engage in trade; and, besides, tools of her trade [legally belonging to her husband] in this case count as stolen." Melinda Maunsell believes that Helen is "both revealed and concealed by her artistic hand; providing her with an acceptable means of expression within her social construction, the artist's hand also offers a form of independence, a possibility of earning a living, in a period when a woman had virtually no independent power base in any sphere."



The story of Helen Graham, according to [Samantha Ellis](#), may have inspired [Emily Mary Osborn's](#) painting *Nameless and Friendless* (1857), which depicts a widow attempting to make a living as an artist.

Nicole A. Diederich has argued that in *The Tenant* Anne Brontë constructs marriage and remarriage as a comparative and competitive practice that restricts Helen's rights and talents. Helen's artistic ability plays a central role in her relationships with both Gilbert and Arthur. Her alternating freedom to paint and inability to do so on her own terms not only complicate Helen's definition as wife, widow, and artist, but also enable Anne Brontë to criticize the [domestic sphere](#) as established by marriage and re-established with remarriage.

At the beginning of her diary, the young and unmarried Helen already defines herself as an artist. Her early drawings reveal her private and true feelings for Arthur Huntingdon, feelings that lead her to overlook his true character and lose herself to marriage. Nevertheless, in addition to revealing Helen's true desires, the self-expression of her artwork also defines her as an artist. That she puts so much of herself into her paintings and drawings attests to this self-definition. After her marriage to Arthur, Helen, accepting the roles of wife and housekeeper, rarely refers to herself as an artist. The marital laws of the day made Helen's artworks legally belong to her husband and allowed Arthur to destroy them when he discovered her plans to earn money by selling paintings. Diederich calls it "an ironic echo" of Helen's destruction of Arthur's portrait just before their engagement when he tried to take it from her. Diederich also points that in attempt to become a fee-earning artist "Helen reclaims her artistic talent as her own, distinct from her husband's possession of her art, and of her."

Posing as a widow, Helen makes her role as an artist who sells her works, especially to support a child, more socially acceptable. Resembling the time of Arthur's courtship, when Helen's portraits of him betrayed her affection, artwork once again serves the autobiographical role during her meetings with Gilbert – the painting of Wildfell Hall deceptively labelled "Fernley Manor" discloses her precarious position as a runaway wife. Showing Gilbert handling Helen's paintings without her permission, Brontë, according to Diederich, "hints that remarriage to Gilbert may not hold any greater promise to Helen's self-definition and freedom as an artist than did her first marriage". However, unlike Arthur, Gilbert shows much more esteem for Helen's artwork. Diederich concludes that "the domestic realm, whether established with marriage or

re-established in remarriage, doesn't support women's self-definition as artists, nor does it provide a structured setting for the unfettered expression of their talents" and that *The Tenant* calls for "more support for married and remarried women's legal rights and artistic opportunities in nineteenth-century Britain".

Universal salvation

Seemingly pious [Universalist](#) ideas in *The Tenant* contradicted prevailing [Protestant](#) doctrine in England and thus advocated a socially unacceptable view. Helen expresses several times in the story her belief in eventual universal salvation for all souls. She does not reassure the elder Arthur about this on his deathbed because she wants him to repent of his wrongdoing on his own accord. Despite his inability to do so, Helen still believes in his redemption.

Style and narrative

Realism

Unlike her elder sisters, Anne Brontë did not follow the [Romantic](#) style in her two novels, opting instead for [Realism](#). Many critics, including Anne's sister Charlotte, considered her depiction of alcoholism and adultery overly graphic and disturbing. In defence, Anne openly stated her writer's intentions in the preface to the second edition of the novel.

When we have to do with vice and vicious characters, I maintain it is better to depict them as they really are than as they would wish to appear. To represent a bad thing in its least offensive light, is doubtless the most agreeable course for a writer of fiction to pursue; but is it the most honest, or the safest? Is it better to reveal the snares and pitfalls of life to the young and thoughtless traveller, or to cover them with branches and flowers?

Often, when depicting the same subject as her sisters, Anne presents it in a completely different light: Wildfell Hall, an old superannuated mansion, she pictures not as a 'haunted' house like [Thornfield Hall](#) or [Wuthering Heights](#) in her sisters' works, but as a decayed relic of an outworn patrician class, whose pretensions are mocked by the recrudescence of building into moor. Stevie Davies has argued that Anne's ancient hall demystifies Gothic. Wildfell Hall is not haunted, it is simply dilapidated, damp and unwelcoming.

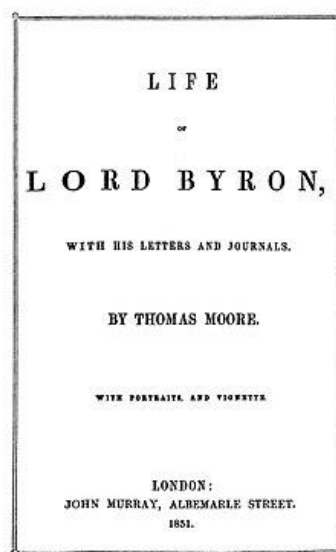
Anne's portrayal of Arthur Huntingdon deflates the [Byronic](#) cult – while witty, adventurous and handsome, he is not endowed with intellectual gifts, nor even vitality, famously exhibited by Heathcliff, and has nothing of the fundamental goodness that finally redeemed Rochester.^[24] All Huntingdon's vices come from his being spoilt as a child. Analyzing the lack of sense and reason amongst males as the consequence of value-system based on the worship of [machismo](#), Anne depicts the pathetic end of her main hero, brought on by his drinking habits. Totally dependent on his estranged wife in his final illness, Arthur Huntingdon ultimately loses all his personality.

According to Caroline Franklin, Anne Brontë uses the Byronic paradigm "not to titillate, but to shock" – her protest against spousal abuse needs no scandal-mongering allusions to be sensational. The character of Helen Graham may have been inspired

by [Anna Isabella Milbanke](#), the wife of [Lord Byron](#), who also thought at first that her religious obligation was to improve her husband's behavior, but very soon she was disillusioned, separated from him and raised their child alone. Despite this, she – like Helen – believed in the ultimate salvation of her husband's soul.

In *The Tenant* vice is not unique to the men. Lady Lowborough's [adultery](#) has a particularly devastating effect on her husband, and the malice of Eliza Millward is poisonous to the entire community. The eternal struggle between good and evil is emphasised by heavy use of biblical references: sinners who repent and listen to reason are brought within the fold, while those who remain stubborn tend to meet violent or miserable ends.

Sisters' connection



Thomas Moore's biography of Byron

[Stevie Davies](#) believes that the settings and characters in *The Tenant* are influenced by Anne's juvenile fiction. In their childhood Emily and Anne Brontë created the imaginary kingdom of [Gondal](#), about which they composed prose and poems. [Thomas Moore](#)'s biography of Byron, with its description of womanizing, gaming and carousing, directly influenced the Gondal mythos and was echoed in Brontë's adult works. The characteristics of Arthur Huntington and Annabella Wilmot, both self-indulgent sexual transgressors, may be the relics of Gondal, where most of the main heroes were extravagant and led adventurous lives.

Four houses in the younger Brontës' novels have "W. H." initials: Wellwood House in *Agnes Grey*, the eponymous mansion in *Wuthering Heights*, and Wildfell Hall and Woodford Hall in *The Tenant*. The original "Ur-hall" in Gondal may be the source of inspiration for at least two of them—Wuthering Heights and Wildfell Hall. Citing all this, Davies concludes that Charlotte's statement that Anne "hated her work [on *The Tenant*]" is not credible.

Framed narration

Notwithstanding Anne's repudiation of the Gothic atmosphere, *The Tenant's* narrative structure is common to Gothic fiction with the usage of framing narrator, letters and diary as clues to a whole truth. However, the narrator, Gilbert Markham, differs from his gothic predecessors in that he and the official standards he represents are shown to be in part the cause of the shocking reality he encounters. Chapters formed from Helen's diary strictly follow its style and differ from Gilbert's narrative. His story is also taken from his own diary. Such adherence to the diaries may be considered as a 'testimony of experience'. Since the [Renaissance](#) writing a diary had been a popular form of documenting and expressing personal opinions.

Naomi Jacobs argues that "the displacement [of framing narration by the inner] is exactly the point of the novel, which subjects its readers to a shouldering-aside of familiar notions and comfortable perceptions of the world", and both narrations and jarring discrepancies of tone and perspective between them are essential to the purpose. In *The Tenant*, like in *Wuthering Heights*, a horrific reality of private life is obtained after passing through the voice of a framing narrator. According to Jacobs, the male narrator represents the public world, and the framed structure serves several functions that are strongly gender-related: it illustrates the process of going behind the official version of reality in order to approach the truth that the culture prefers to deny; it exemplifies the ways in which domestic reality is obscured by layers of conventional ideology; and it replicates the cultural split between male and female spheres that is shown to be one of the sources of the tragedy in the novel. Jacobs concludes that both Emily and Anne seemed to find it necessary, in approaching subjects that were considered to be controversial, to use the voice of a male narrator, appropriating, delegitimizing and even ridiculing his power, before telling anti-patriarchal truth.

Carol A. Senf believes that the "unique narrative structure, the wife's story framed by that of her husband... encourages the reader to focus on questions of gender". According to Tess O'Toole, the architecture of Brontë's narrative stresses and calls attention to the disjunction of two different forms of domestic containment, one deriving from marriage, the other from the natal family. Priti Joshi, noting Helen and Gilbert's suspicion of spoken words and reliance on the visual, and their faith in the written word, concludes that a diary is a fitting narrative device because the characters require it, and that the epistolary narrative form reflects this faith.

Direct speech

Josephine McDonagh believes that some of the stylistic features of *The Tenant* may be influenced by the print culture of the Brontës' time. For example, Anne's concern to preserve the integrity of each of her narrators' voices is similar to magazine structure that maintains the voice of individual contributors. The novel's labyrinthine structure is established by the application of direct speech. Gilbert's letter incorporates Helen's diary; and in turn, Helen's diary includes Arthur's autobiographical reminiscences.

Genre

From social comedy to social drama

Anne Brontë starts her novel in a social comedy manner, reminiscent of [Jane Austen](#). Like [Pride and Prejudice](#), *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* starts with the arrival of a new person in a neighbourhood—a source of curiosity for a small rural community. Unlike Austen, Brontë makes a woman the centre of interest. Reticent Mrs Graham with her views on alcohol consumption and girls' education, controversial for the 19th century, soon becomes an outcast.

Domestic drama

Tess O'Toole calls *The Tenant* "the most unusual example of 19th century domestic fiction", and attributes to that the relative marginalization of the novel in the Brontë sisters' oeuvre. According to O'Toole, Anne, unlike her elder sisters, seems to juxtapose rather than to collapse kinship and sexual relations. The relationship between Frederick and Helen is insular and cannot solve all the problems or contradictions that cluster around the concept of the domestic.

Helen's retreat from her husband is followed by a return to her natal family origins, symbolized by her return to the home in which she was born, and adoption of her mother's maiden name as her alias. The relationship between Helen and Frederick, sister and brother, who spent all their childhood apart and reunited only as adults, is foregrounded to domestic reform – Frederick's virtue compensates for their father's neglect of Helen, and their comfortable relationship, defined by mutual respect and understanding, contrasts with Helen's problematic relationship with her husband and her suitor.

Novel of ideas

In the third chapter *The Tenant* changes tone to the [novel of ideas](#). In a powerfully argued Miltonic debate about virtue, experience, choice and temptation, Helen challenges the segregated education of the two sexes, with its over-exposure for boys and over-protection for girls.

The novel's critique of libertine men may be influenced by the works of [Mary Wollstonecraft](#). Priti Joshi, believing that Anne had read her works, argues that she not only refuses the Wollstonecraftian indictment of the feminine, but also rejects its elevation, articulated by [Hannah More](#). Anne Brontë's feminism, in Joshi's words, "forges a path between the extremes of Wollstonecraft-More spectrum". In *The Tenant*, a reformed masculinity emerges not, as More would have it, under the tutelage of a woman, but by emulating feminine ways. Anne presents the "idle talk" of Linden-Car villagers primary as a way of creating fellowship and community, not only as vicious gossip. According to Joshi, the gossip of middle-class Linden-Car functions not as a critique of the behavior, but rather to heighten its contrast with the chilling atmosphere of the upper-class estate.¹

While refusing to believe whispered insinuations, the main heroes are led astray by precisely the evidence of their eyes: Gilbert, spying Helen walking with Frederick, mistakenly takes them to be lovers, and Helen's naïve empiricism leads her to

disastrous marriage. Helen's faith in the written word and the class reserve that lead her to confide her troubles to diary, "the best friend I could have for the purpose [of a confidential talk]", is also shown as folly when her husband confiscates the diary and reads its contents.

Criticism

Contemporary reviews

The Tenant of Wildfell Hall challenged the prevailing [morals](#) of the [Victorian era](#). Especially shocking was Helen's slamming of her bedroom door in the face of her husband after continuing abuse. [Charles Kingsley](#), in his review for [Fraser's Magazine](#) wrote: "A people's novel of a very different school is *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*. It is, taken altogether, a powerful and an interesting book. Not that it is a pleasant book to read, nor, as we fancy, has it been a pleasant book to write; still less has it been a pleasant training which could teach an author such awful facts, or give courage to write them. The fault of the book is coarseness—not merely that coarseness of subject which will be the stumbling-block of most readers, and which makes it utterly unfit to be put into the hands of girls..." Despite this, he believed that: "[English] society owes thanks, not sneers, to those who dare to shew her the image of her own ugly, hypocritical visage".



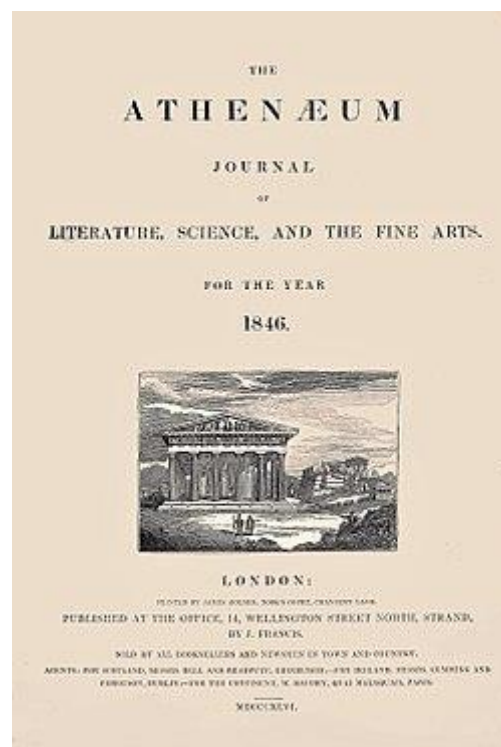
[Charles Kingsley](#) believed that English society "owes thanks, not sneers" to [Anne Brontë](#)

[The Spectator](#) wrote: "*The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, like its predecessor [[Jane Eyre](#)], suggests the idea of considerable abilities ill applied. There is power, effect, and even nature, though of an extreme kind, in its pages; but there seems in the writer a morbid love for the coarse, not to say the brutal; so that his level subjects are not very attractive, and the more forcible are displeasing or repulsive, from their gross, physical, or profligate substratum. He might reply, that such things are in life... Mere existence, however, as we have often had occasion to remark, is not a sufficient reason for a choice of subject: its general or typical character is a point to consider, and its power of pleasing must be regarded, as well as its mere capabilities of force or effect. It is not only the subject of this novel, however, that is objectionable, but

the manner of treating it. There is a coarseness of tone throughout the writing of all these Bells [Charlotte, Emily and Anne Brontë], that puts an offensive subject in its worst point of view, and which generally contrives to dash indifferent things".

A critic in [*The Athenaeum*](#), probably [H. F. Chorley](#), cited *The Tenant* as "the most entertaining novel we have read in a month past". However, he warned the authors, having in mind all the novels from Curren, Ellis and Acton Bell published by 1848, "against their fancy for dwelling upon what is disagreeable".

[*The Examiner*](#), while praising all Brontës as "a hardy race", who "do not lounge in drawing-rooms or boudoirs", and "not common-place writers", considered *The Tenant's* frame structure "a fatal error: for, after so long and minute a history [of Helen's marriage to Arthur], we cannot go back and recover the enthusiasm which we have been obliged to dismiss a volume and half before". The gossiping of the inhabitants of Linden-Car village reminded it of [Jane Austen's](#) style, but "with less of that particular quality which her dialogues invariably possessed". Considering the novel's structure as "faulty", *Examiner* concludes that "it is scarcely possible to analyze [the novel]".



The Athenaeum was one of a few magazines that was not hostile towards *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*

An American magazine [*Literature World*](#), believing all the novels by Curren, Ellis and Acton Bell were produced by the same person, praised their author as a genius, who can make "his incongruities appear natural". Noting, that "all that is good or attractive about [the male characters in *The Tenant*] is or might be womanish" it supposes that the author may be "some gifted and retired woman". Despite considering *The Tenant* "infinitely inferior" to *Jane Eyre*, *Literature World* admits that the two novels share "the same mysterious word-painting" with which the author "conveys the scene he (or she) describes to the mind's eye, so as not only to impress it with the mere

view, but to speak, as it were, to the imagination, to the inner sense, as is ever the case with the Poetry as the Painting of real genius". Again having in mind both *Jane Eyre* and *The Tenant*, it concludes: "However objectionable these works may be to crude minds which cannot winnow the chaff vulgarity from the rich grain of genius which burdens them, very many, while enjoying the freshness and vigour, will gladly hail their appearance, as boldly and eloquently developing blind places of wayward passion in the human heart, which is far more interesting to trace than all bustling traces and murky alleys, through which the will-o'-the-wisp genius of [Dickens](#) has so long led the public mind".

[Edwin Percy Whipple](#) from [North American Review](#) considered *The Tenant* "less unpleasant" than *Wuthering Heights*. However, both novels, in his opinion, were constructed with an "excessive clumsiness" and "the brutal element of human nature" was equally "given prominence" in them. He continues: "[*The Tenant*] seems a convincing proof, that there is nothing kindly in [this] author's powerful mind, and that, if he continues to write novels, he will introduce into the land of romance a larger number of hateful men and women than any other author of the day". In Gilbert he sees "nothing good, except rude honesty", and while acknowledging Helen's "strong-mindedness", he finds no "lovable or feminine virtues". Despite this, Whipple praised novels characterization: "All the characters are drawn with great power and precision of outline, and the scenes are vivid as the life itself." Helen's marriage to Arthur he sees as "a reversal of the process carried on in *Jane Eyre*", but Arthur Huntingdon, in his opinion, is "no Rochester". "He is never virtuously inclined, except in those periods of illness and feebleness which his debaucheries have occasioned". Whipple concludes: "The reader of Acton Bell gains no enlarged view of mankind, giving a healthy action to his sympathies, but is confined to a narrow space of life, and held down, as it were, by main force, to witness the wolfish side of his nature literally and logically set forth. But the criminal courts are not the places in which to take a comprehensive view of humanity and the novelist who confines his observation to them is not likely to produce any lasting impression except of horror and disgust".

Sharpe's London Magazine, believing "despite reports to the contrary" that "[no] woman could have written such a work", warned its readers, especially ladies, against reading *The Tenant*. While acknowledging "the powerful interest of the story", "the talent with which it is written" and an "excellent moral", it argued that "like the fatal melody of the Syren's song, its very perfections render it more dangerous, and therefore more carefully to be avoided". In *Sharpe's* opinion, the novel's "evils which render the work unfit for perusal" arose from "a perverted taste and an absence of mental refinement in the writer, together with a total ignorance of the usages of good society". It argues that the scenes of debauchery "are described with a disgustingly truthful minuteness, which shows the writer to be only too well acquainted with the revolting details of such evil revelry" and considers it a final "proof of the unreadableness of these volumes". Helen's belief in [Universal salvation](#) was also castigated: "The dangerous tendency of such a belief must be apparent to any one who gives the subject a moment's consideration; and it becomes scarcely necessary, in order to convince our readers of the madness of trusting to such a forced distortion of the Divine attribute of mercy, to add that this doctrine is alike repugnant to Scripture, and in direct opposition to the teaching of the [Anglican Church](#)".

[The Rambler](#), arguing that *Jane Eyre* and *The Tenant* were written by the same person, stated that the latter is "not so bad a book as *Jane Eyre*", which it believed to be "one of the coarsest of the books we ever perused". The Reverend Michael Millward was considered by *Rambler* as "one of the least disagreeable individuals" in the novel, while Helen's Universalist views were criticised as either "false and bad" or "vague and unmeaning". It concludes: "Unless our authoress can contrive to refine and elevate her general notions of all human and divine things, we shall be glad to learn that she is not intending to add another work to those which have already been produced by her pen".

[G. H. Lewes](#), in [Leader Magazine](#), shortly after Anne's death, wrote: "Curious enough is to read *Wuthering Heights* and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, and remember that the writers were two retiring, solitary, consumptive girls! Books, coarse even for men, coarse in language and coarse in conception, the coarseness apparently of violence and uncultivated men – turn out to be the productions of two girls living almost alone, filling their loneliness with quiet studies, and writing their books from a sense of duty, hating the pictures they drew, yet drawing them with austere conscientiousness! There is matter here for the moralist or critic to speculate on".

Suppression and subsequent criticism

A great success on initial publication, *The Tenant* was almost forgotten in subsequent years. When it became due for a reprint, just over a year after Anne's death, Charlotte prevented its re-publication. (The novel was out of print in England until 1854, but not in America, which had no copyright restriction.) Some critics believe that Charlotte's suppression of the book was to protect her younger sister's memory from further onslaughts. Others believe Charlotte was jealous of her younger sister. Even before Anne's death Charlotte had criticized the novel, stating in a letter to W.S. Williams: "That it had faults of execution, faults of art, was obvious, but faults of intention of feeling could be suspected by none who knew the writer. For my part, I consider the subject unfortunately chosen – it was one the author was not qualified to handle at once vigorously and truthfully. The simple and natural – quiet description and simple pathos – are, I think Acton Bell's forte. I liked *Agnes Grey* better than the present work." [Juliet Barker](#), in her biography of the Brontës, concluded that "Charlotte, it appears, was prepared to consign her sister's novel to oblivion because she considered its subject at odds with her own perception of what Anne's character was and ought to have been."

[Elizabeth Gaskell](#) repeated Charlotte's words about Anne in [The Life of Charlotte Brontë](#), claiming that the subject of *The Tenant* "was painfully discordant to one who would fain have sheltered herself from all but peaceful and religious ideas".^[41] In his essay on Emily Brontë, [Algernon Charles Swinburne](#) briefly mentioned *The Tenant* in the context of Branwell's decline as a novel "which deserves perhaps a little more notice and recognition than it has ever received" and added that "as a study of utterly flaccid and invertebrate immorality it bears signs of more faithful transcription from life than anything in *Jane Eyre* or *Wuthering Heights*". [Margaret Oliphant](#) believed that Anne "would have no right to be considered at all as a writer but for her association with [her sisters'] imperative spirits". [Mary Ward](#), a novelist, who was widely known for her anti-feminist views, in her introduction to 1900 edition of *The Tenant*, accused

Anne of "the narrowness of view" and absence of "some subtle, innate correspondence between eye and brain, between brain and hand, [which] was present in Emily and Charlotte". She concluded that "it is not as the writer of *Wildfell Hall*, but as the sister of Charlotte and Emily Brontë, that Anne Brontë escapes oblivion." [May Sinclair](#), while famously saying that "when [Anne] slammed the door of Mrs Huntingdon's bedroom she slammed it in the face of society and all existing moralities and conventions", considered that she "had no genius". Despite that, her opinion about *The Tenant* was unexpectedly high: "There are scenes, there are situations, in Anne's amazing novel, which for sheer audacity stand alone in mid-Victorian literature, and which would hold their own in the literature of revolt that followed... Her diagnosis of certain states, her realization of certain motives, suggests [Balzac](#) rather than any of the Brontës." In her introduction to the 1914 edition of the novel Sinclair was also ambivalent about Anne and her novel — while acclaiming it as "the first presentment of that Feminist novel", she stated that "it bores to tears". Her opinion of Helen was also mixed: "If Agnes Grey is a little prig, Helen Huntingdon is a prig enormous... She is Anne Brontë's idea of noble womanhood, the first of the modern, large-souled, intellectual heroines." The only thing Sinclair wholly approved of was the author's treatment of marital laws of the time: "Anne Brontë attacks her problem with a freedom and audacity before which her sisters' boldest enterprises seem cowardly and restrained... Her behaviour is the least unusual, not to say revolutionary."



Novelist [George Moore](#), an admirer of Anne Brontë's novels

Despite the general dismissiveness of the late 19th–early 20th century critics, Anne still had supporters in literary circles. Esther Alice Chadwick, while believing that Anne lacked "the fire and passion of her sisters" and was "inferior" to them, claimed that she is still "a character well worth studying". Chadwick also considered *The Tenant* to be "probably the first [temperance](#) novel". [George Moore](#), an [Anglo-Irish](#) writer, was an admirer of Anne Brontë's novels; he believed that Anne "had all the qualities of Jane Austen and other qualities", that "she could write with heat", and if "she had lived ten years longer she would have taken a place beside Jane Austen, perhaps even a higher place". He declared that *The Tenant* had "the rarest literary quality of heat", and blamed Charlotte Brontë for her youngest sister's loss of reputation.

Only in 1929 the first dedicated biography of Anne came out – it was a short [monograph](#) by W. T. Hale, where he stated that in the "ideas and situations", presented in *The Tenant*, Anne "was way ahead of her times" and that "she rushed in where [Thackeray](#) dared not tread." However, Hale believed that Anne "will never be known to fame either as novelist or poet, but only as the sister of Charlotte and Emily."

In 1959, two biographies were published: *Anne Brontë, her life and work* by Ada Harrison and [Derek Stanford](#) and *Anne Brontë* by [Winifred Gérin](#). Noting that *The Tenant* was published some ten years before [George Eliot](#)'s novels, Harrison and Stanford named Anne the "first [realist](#) woman writer" in Great Britain. Unlike some early critics, who considered the scenes of debauchery improbable, Harrison and Stanford believed them to be "described in a fashion which [Zola](#) might have admired". Winifred Gérin believed Helen Graham to be "one of the first married women in fiction who is both competent and resolved to keep herself not by any of the accepted means as housekeeper, companion or governess, but as a painter, selling her canvasses to dealers." Despite this, in her later work on the Brontës, Gérin dismissed *The Tenant* as being "written too obviously as a work of propaganda, a treatise against drunkenness, to be considered a work of art". Several years later, however, Gérin wrote an introduction to *The Tenant*, where, while considering the framed structure in both *The Tenant* and *Wuthering Heights* a "clumsy devise", acknowledged Anne's "pre-eminent gift of story-teller" and "eloquence in proclaiming the equality of men and women". She believed that *The Tenant* "might be said to be the first manifesto for '[Women's Lib](#)'". [Inga-Stina Ewbank](#) considered Anne the least talented of the sisters and claimed that the framing structure – where "Helen can reveal her innermost being to the diary" while Gilbert is "bound to be as objective as possible" – "throws the novel out of balance". However, she believed that "through the very nature of its central concern, *The Tenant* is feminist in the deepest sense of the word."



Branwell Brontë

[Daphne du Maurier](#) discussed *The Tenant* in the context of the biography of Anne's brother, [Branwell Brontë](#). Du Maurier praised the narrative structure, "two separate stories most cleverly combined in one", and believed Gilbert Markham "with his utter confidence in his powers of attracting the opposite sex" to be modelled on Branwell. Presuming that he was familiar with his sisters' novels, du Maurier believed that the story of Helen's marital life with Arthur Huntingdon may have been "a warning to Branwell" and the relationship between "erring, neglectful husband" and "the pious,

praying wife" resembles Branwell's views on the marriage of Lydia Robinson, the woman at whose house he was employed as a tutor to her son, while Anne was governess to her daughters. Du Maurier concluded that in childhood years Branwell "shared in his sister's writings; somehow he must continue to live out their characters in the world of his imagination".

In her early essays on Anne Brontë's novels and poetry [Muriel Spark](#) praised her proficiency. She believed that Charlotte was a "harsh sister to Anne" and "had she taken an impartial view of *Wildfell Hall*, she must have discovered its merits." Despite notion that Charlotte and Emily were "more gifted", Spark stated that "[Anne's] writings none the less take no mean place in [nineteenth-century literature](#)." However, some forty years later, in the introduction to *The Essence of the Brontës*, Spark radically changed her views on Anne: "I do not now agree with my former opinion on Anne Brontë's value as a writer. I think her works are not good enough to be considered in any serious context of the nineteenth century novel or that there exists any literary basis for comparison with the brilliant creative works of Charlotte and Emily... She was a writer who could 'pen' a story well enough; she was a literary equivalent of a decent water-colourist."

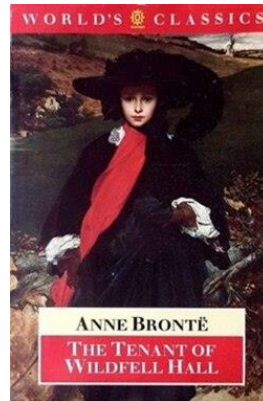
Only in the last decades of the 20th century *The Tenant* began to get critical acclaim. Elizabeth Langland in her 1989 monograph *Anne Brontë: The Other One* said: "It is worth pausing briefly to reflect on what might have been Anne's fate had *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* been re-published with *Agnes Grey* so that critics could re-acquaint themselves with Anne's greater novel and so that critics could take that opportunity to measure the substantial artistic growth between the two novels." Langland argued that the heroines in Anne's novels influenced those of Charlotte, and named Anne among the first women writers to adopt a woman as narrator. Langland concluded that "if Charlotte Brontë was radical in claiming sexual identity for women, then Anne Brontë was radical in claiming professional identity for women." [Robert Liddell](#), noting Anne's apparent distaste for [Romantic tradition](#), claimed that *The Tenant* criticized both Branwell's life and *Wuthering Heights*. Edward Chitham in *A Life of Anne Brontë* (1991) also juxtaposed the novels of Anne and her sisters'. He stated that in Anne's view *Wuthering Heights* exhibited elements which she called in the preface to the second edition of *The Tenant* a "soft nonsense", thus making "almost an accusation against Emily". Unlike Chitham and Liddell, Maria H. Frawley identified the central element in *The Tenant* as the criticism of 19th century domestic ideology that encouraged women to "construct themselves as ethereal angels of morality and virtue". Betty Jay, analyzing Helen's marital experience, concluded that *The Tenant* "not only demonstrates that the individual is subject to powerful ideological forces which delineate his or her place within culture and society, but that there are ways in which these forces can be subverted and resisted by those who suffer as a result. In a narrative which dramatizes the complex interplay between subject and society by focusing on the marital experience of a woman, Brontë highlights the extent to which the internal and supposedly private realms of desire and domesticity are also intensely political."

The Tenant has established its reputation as a landmark feminist text. In her 1996 introduction to the novel, [Stevie Davies](#) called it "a feminist manifesto of revolutionary

power and intelligence". The novel's framing structure, long dismissed as faulty, started to get acclaim as a fitting narrative device, essential to Anne's critical and artistic purposes. ^{[25][26][13]}

On 5 November 2019, the [BBC News](#) listed *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* on its list of the [100 most influential novels](#).

Mutilated text



Cover for 1993 [Oxford World's Classics](#) edition

Although the publishers respected Charlotte's wishes, shortly before her death in 1854 the London firm of Thomas Hodgson issued a one-volume edition of *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*. Hodgson performed extensive editing of the novel, removing many sections, including the chapter headings and the opening letter, that starts with: "To J. Halford, Esq. Dear Halford, When we were together last..." Other omissions ranged from single words to almost complete chapters (such as the 28th); some sections were completely rearranged in an attempt to compensate for the omissions. Most subsequent English editions, including those eventually produced by Charlotte's publisher, [Smith, Elder & Co.](#), followed this mutilated text. These copies are still prevalent today, despite notes on their covers claiming them to be complete and unabridged. In 1992, [Oxford University Press](#) published the Clarendon Edition of the novel, which is based on the first edition, but incorporating the preface and the corrections presented in the second edition.

Adaptations

Radio show version

Ten episodes aired from 28 November to 9 December 2011 on [BBC Radio 4](#), with [Hattie Morahan](#) as Helen, [Robert Lonsdale](#) as Gilbert and [Leo Bill](#) as Arthur.

Television versions

The novel has twice been adapted for television by the [BBC](#). The [first version, made in 1968](#), starred [Janet Munro](#), [Corin Redgrave](#) and [Bryan Marshall](#). [Tara Fitzgerald](#), [Toby Stephens](#), [Rupert Graves](#) and [James Purefoy](#) starred in the [second version, made in 1996](#).

Theatre and musical versions

The novel was adapted as a three-act opera at the [University of Nebraska-Lincoln](#) with music composed by Garrett Hope and libretto by Steven Soebbing.

The [University of British Columbia](#) adaptation of *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* premiered in October 2015, adapted by Jacqueline Firkins and directed by Sarah Rogers.

In 2017 the novel was adapted by [Deborah McAndrew](#) and directed by Elizabeth Newman. The production opened in the [Octagon Theatre, Bolton](#) and then moved into [York Theatre Royal](#).

The 2022 adaptation by Emme Hoy premiered at [Roslyn Packer Theatre](#) in [Sydney](#), Australia on June 21. The production was directed by Jessica Arthur.

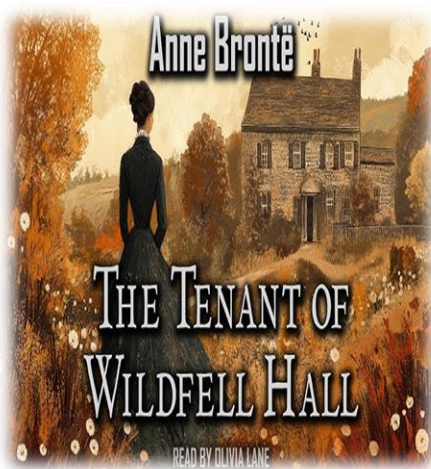
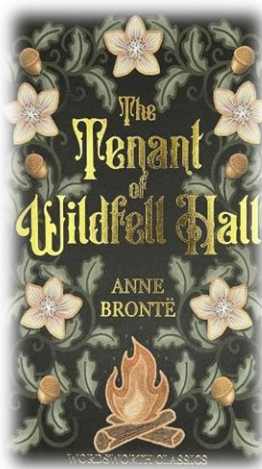
Literary adaptations

The Woman Who Ran (2016) by Sam Baker is a modernized retelling.

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The Legacy of Anne Brontë

<https://www.annebronte.org/2017/03/20/after-the-death-of-anne-bronte-the-legacy/>



Anne Brontë died on May 28th, 1849 in Scarborough, watched by her sister Charlotte and their friend Ellen Nussey. For Charlotte Brontë especially it marked the end of a traumatic period that had seen Anne, Emily and Branwell Brontë all die from tuberculosis within a nine month period. Being far from home as she was, she knew that it was now incumbent upon her to make the arrangements for Anne's burial, but it was beyond her medical and physical capability at that time.

A mournful letter was sent to the Haworth Parsonage, and Patrick wrote back saying that he had known when his youngest daughter Anne had left him on May 24th, that he would never see her alive again. He also urged Charlotte to take a much-needed break before returning to her home nearly a hundred miles away at the other side of Yorkshire.



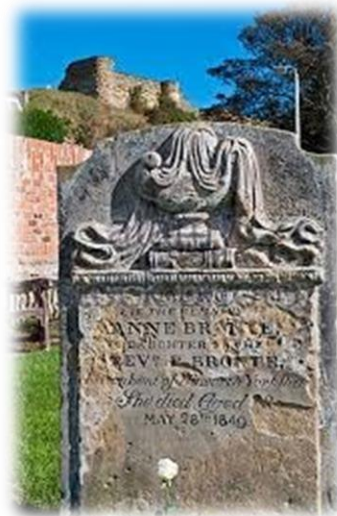
Charlotte's of Filey remembers the stay of Charlotte Bronte

Charlotte had little choice but to accept, feeling weak in body and mind, and with Ellen beside her she stayed another week in Scarborough. After that she journeyed down the coast to the resort of Filey, where she remained for ten days, and then Bridlington. Cliff House, where she stayed in Filey, is now a café called 'Charlotte's' in honour of its guest who returned there once more in 1852. She finally arrived back, alone, in Haworth on 20th June, nearly a month after she had left with her only remaining sibling. She wrote a poignant and moving letter to W.S. Williams, of her publisher, telling how she was greeted by the dogs that Anne and Emily had left behind:

"The ecstasy of these poor animals [Flossy and Keeper] when I came in was something singular... I am certain they thought that, as I was returned, my sisters were not far behind - but here my sisters will come no more. Keeper may visit Emily's little bed-room, as he still does day by day, and Flossy may look wistfully round for Anne - they will never see them again - nor shall I."

In the immediate hours and days following Anne's death, it was the ever-helpful Ellen who had to take on many of the organisational duties. This included organising Anne's headstone. Unfortunately, Ellen made several unintentional errors, as it seems that Charlotte was in no state to supply the correct information to her at the time. When Charlotte gathered the mental strength to

re-visit Anne's grave for the first time three years later, she found that the headstone contained five errors. She paid to have them corrected, but one, famously, still remains. The headstone reads: 'She died aged 28, May 28th 1849'. She was in fact 29. The fact that this remained unchanged may indicate that Charlotte herself wasn't sure how old her sister actually was. Further evidence of this could be found in the Brontë memorial that stood in St. Michael & All Angels' church in Haworth. This, as evidenced by Elizabeth Gaskell in her biography of Charlotte, stated that Anne had died even younger than the Scarborough headstone did, saying that she was aged 27.



Anne Brontë's gravestone underneath Scarborough Castle

Anne now lies buried in the churchyard of St. Mary's, Scarborough just underneath the hill and castle. I, and many others, still visit it and lay flowers there. Here's a tip: if you want to visit it, Anne's grave isn't in the main churchyard itself, but at the top of an annexe to the side and above what is now a car park.

St. Mary's, however, was being renovated at the time, and so the funeral itself had to be held in Scarborough's Christ Church. The doctor who had visited Anne in her last hours was so impressed with her character that he offered to come to the funeral, but Charlotte excused him of this duty. It would be just she and Ellen at the funeral; or so she thought. Upon arriving at the church on Tuesday, 30th May, they found a woman already there. It was Margaret Wooler, Anne's former teacher, who was residing in Scarborough and had heard of her passing and come to pay her respects, as well as providing comfort to her former pupil and colleague Charlotte.

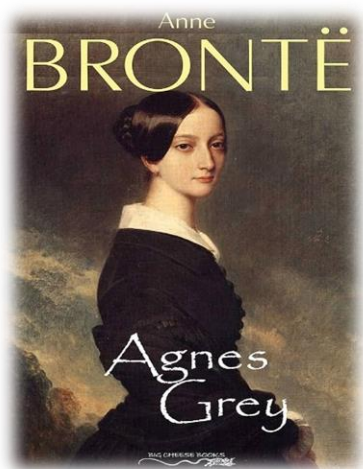
In the weeks, months and years following Anne's death, Charlotte would often suffer from dark bouts of depression; just the sight of the moors around her

home would remind her of her departed sisters Emily and Anne, who had loved to roam them so recently.

Her feelings at this time are summed up in perhaps her best, and certainly most succinct poem, 'On the Death of Anne Brontë', written on 21st June, 1849:

'There's little joy in life for me,
And little terror in the grave;
I've lived the parting hour to see,
Of one I would have died to save.
Calmly to watch the failing breath,
Wishing each sigh might be the last;
Longing to see the shade of death
O'er those beloved features cast.
The cloud, the stillness that must part
The darling of my life from me;
And then to thank God from my heart,
To thank him well and fervently;
Although I knew that we had lost
The hope and glory of our life;
And now, benighted, tempest-tossed,
Must bear alone the weary strife.'

Charlotte Brontë's relationship with Anne, like that of any sisters, could be fractious at times, but as this poem shows there was also a real love between them. Anne Brontë is gone, but her work remains, and that legacy is gaining more recognition and praise as the years pass.



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The Brontë Sisters



Emily
Wuthering Heights



Charlotte
Jane Eyre



Anne
The Tenant of Wildfell Hall

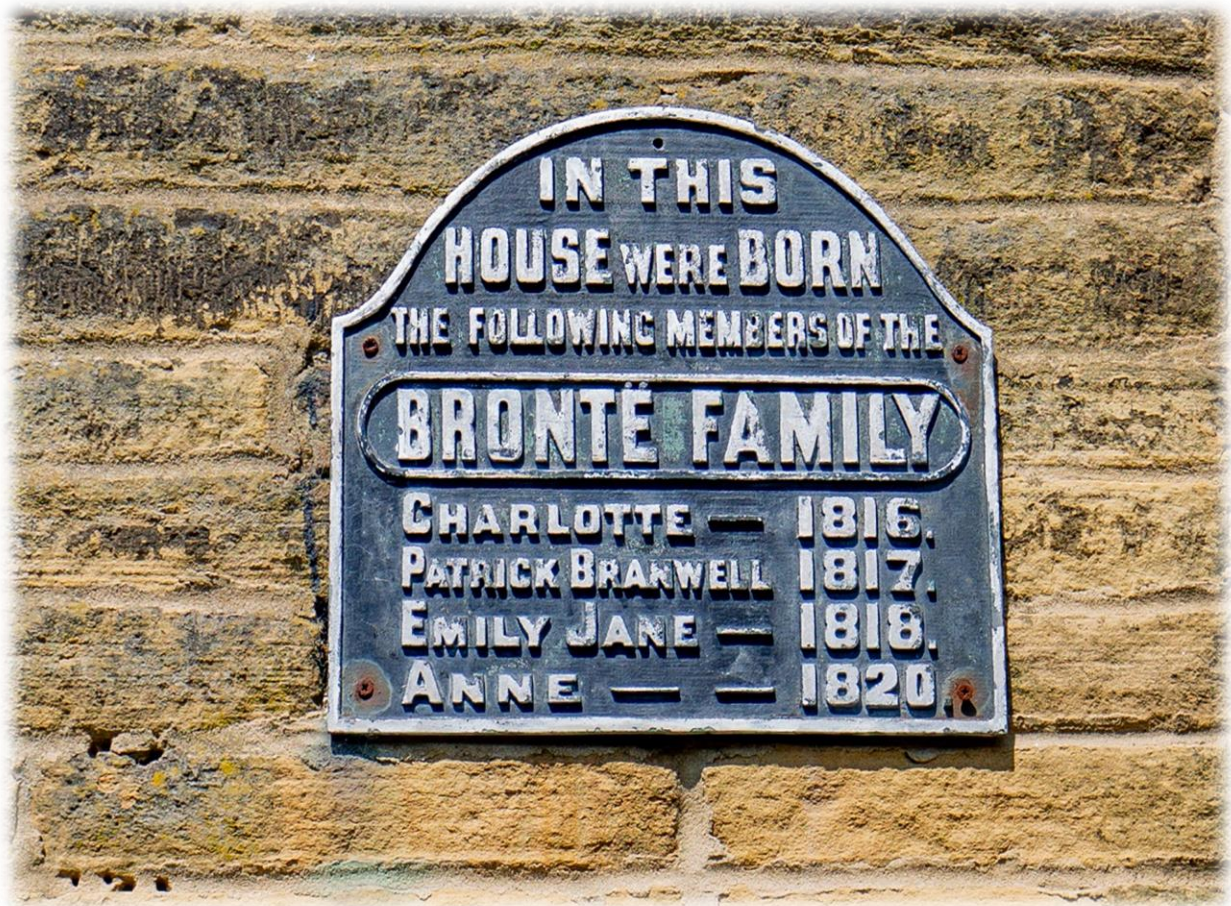


Brontë Birthplace

<https://haworthguide.co.uk/bronte-birthplace-in-thornton>

Though often associated with their later home at the **Brontë Parsonage in Haworth**, the **Brontë siblings**—Charlotte, Branwell, Emily, and Anne—were born at the former parsonage on Market Street in Thornton. This unassuming house is where their remarkable lives began and holds a special place in Brontë history as the birthplace of these renowned authors.

Patrick Brontë and his wife, Maria, moved to Thornton in May 1815 with their two young children, Maria and Elizabeth. They lived there until 1820, when they relocated to **Haworth**. During their time at the Thornton parsonage, Patrick and Maria welcomed the births of **Charlotte** (1816), Branwell (1817), Emily (1818), and Anne (1820).



Campaign to Save the Sister's First Home

Despite worries that the property would be bought by developers and stripped of its identity, a crowdfunding campaign has managed to raise the funds to secure the property, with plans to reopen to the public after several years of closure.

The newly formed Brontë Birthplace Campaign, driven by local enthusiasts and supporters worldwide, launched an ambitious effort to keep the birthplace open to the public. The campaign attracted over 700 individual investors and raised significant funds, including grants from Bradford City of Culture 2025 and the Community Ownership Fund, which together contributed over £650,000.

One of the donors, Nigel West—a distant relative of Charlotte Brontë's husband, Arthur Bell Nicholls—made a "significant contribution" to the campaign. The house is now officially under public ownership, a first in its 200-year history.



Brontë Birthplace Limited, a committee dedicated to the restoration of the birthplace building, has taken on the responsibility of managing

and restoring the property. Plans are underway to complete renovations in time for Bradford City of Culture 2025, allowing visitors to walk in the footsteps of the famous Brontë family.

Future visitors will be able to sit beside the original parlour fireplace in a community café and may even stay in the rooms where the Brontë children slept. The preservation of the birthplace ensures that the Brontës' literary legacy remains accessible to all who wish to experience this significant site firsthand.

Inside the Brontë Birthplace

Entering the parsonage, the drawing room is to the left, while the dining room is to the right. It was in this dining room, by the fireplace, that Charlotte, Emily, Anne, and Branwell were born. Down a few steps from the dining room is the former butcher's shop area, a later addition to the house added in 1898.



Back in the main hall, a door to the right of the staircase provides access to the kitchen and scullery, which has its own staircase used by the household's servants.

Upstairs are the family bedrooms, with Patrick and Maria's room directly above the dining room, and the children's bedroom located above the drawing room. A small passageway from the children's room leads to the nursemaids' quarters, where Nancy and Sarah Garrs cared for the children during their years at Thornton.

Restoration Plans and Community Involvement

With the Brontë birthplace saved, efforts are underway to restore the Grade II* listed building, ensuring that it remains a place for literary exploration and community engagement.

Alongside the preservation work, hidden features of the house have been uncovered, including a previously unseen servant's staircase, Patrick Brontë's wardrobe, and the original deeds dating back over two centuries. These historical discoveries, along with the planned restoration, will create a uniquely immersive experience for Brontë enthusiasts and visitors alike.

The community has rallied around this monumental achievement, allowing the Brontë birthplace to become a cherished cultural landmark within Brontë Country. From school programs to literary events, the newly preserved parsonage promises to welcome and inspire future generations of Brontë admirers from around the world.



<https://brontebirthplace.com/>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bront%C3%AB_Birthplace

Biography

of

Bronte Family

[{http://www.brontefamily.org/history.html}](http://www.brontefamily.org/history.html)

Patrick and Maria Bronte had six children (from oldest to youngest): Maria, Elizabeth, Charlotte, Branwell, Emily, and Anne. Soon after Patrick had been appointed to a parish in Haworth, Yorkshire, his wife died, leaving the parson and the young children behind (the oldest, Maria, only seven years old). Maria, Elizabeth, Charlotte, and Emily began attending Cowan Bridge School three years after their mother's death. Tragically, Maria and Elizabeth both died of tuberculosis, which had infected the school. Patrick hastened to bring Charlotte and Emily home after learning of the deaths of his two older daughters.

Six years after the loss of her sisters, Charlotte set off for Roe Head School. She returned a little after a year later and taught her sisters. In 1835, Charlotte became a teacher at Roe Head, and Emily became a student there, but she only lasted three months. She would speak to no one except Charlotte and became very thin and pale. She was soon back at Haworth. Anne took Emily's place at Roe Head.

In the next few years, Emily became a teacher at Law Hill School. Failure was the result. Emily endured her position for six months; she disliked teaching very much, and longed for the moors that surrounded her home.

In February of 1842, Charlotte and Emily went to Brussels. They stayed at the Pensionnat Heger, where they became pupils. Madame Heger was the head of the school. The two sisters learned French, German, music, singing, writing, arithmetic, and drawing.

At home, Aunt Branwell had become very ill. Charlotte and Emily came home, only to find her dead and buried. Afterwards, Emily stayed at the Parsonage, but Charlotte went back to Brussels. She became a teacher at the Pensionnat, but she was very dissatisfied with her students. In a letter to Branwell, she said:

"I can discern only one or two [pupils] who deserve anything like regard...They have not intellect or politeness or good-nature or good-feeling..."

Madame Heger thought that Charlotte had fallen in love with her husband, and therefore became very cold and distant towards her. Monsieur Heger taught her German, but otherwise, had little to do with her. Early in 1844, Charlotte came home, but continued to write to Monsieur Heger, even though he allowed her to write to him only twice a year.

Branwell's talents seemed very promising. He was seen as the gifted one in the family. His father had hired a painting master to teach his only son, and it was also thought that Branwell could possibly turn out to be a poet or a journalist. Unfortunately, Fate dictated otherwise. Branwell was to go to London to attend the Royal Academy Schools, but he did not present himself as planned. Instead, he roamed the streets of London, wasting his money on alcohol. Later on, when he had failed at portrait painting and working on railroads, he tried his hand at tutoring (the Robinson family hired him). Branwell was dismissed because of "irregularities," as it was termed. He had been having an affair with Mrs. Robinson. Finally, at age 31, Charlotte's only brother died.

Meanwhile, Charlotte, Emily, and Anne had begun publishing their poetry and novels. Charlotte had written *Jane Eyre* (1846), *Shirley* (1849), and *Villette* (1853). It was not until after her death that *The Professor* was published in 1857. Charlotte had begun several novels, but she never finished them. Emily's novel *Wuthering Heights* was published in 1847. Anne's accomplishments included *Agnes Grey* (1847) and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848). All of the Bronte sisters had contributed poems to a collection of poetry, entitled *Poems by Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell* (1846). Currer, Ellis and Acton were the aliases assumed by Charlotte, Emily, and Anne Bronte. The sisters lived in such times that women were not always given a fair chance in the business world.

Therefore, they assumed masculine names, so that their books would have a better chance of being published.

Disaster struck in October of 1848, when Emily fell sick with tuberculosis. In December of 1848, Emily's coffin was laid in the same vault as that of her mother and brother. Anne soon followed her sister to the grave, after she was consumed by the same relentless disease that had deprived her mother, brother, and three sisters of their lives.

The only remaining members of the Bronte family were Patrick and Charlotte. Charlotte was very deeply grieved at the loss of her companions. Writing restored her energy. In Shirley, she explained her feelings:

"...who cares for imagination? Who does not think it a rather dangerous, senseless attribute - akin to weakness - perhaps partaking of frenzy - a disease rather than a gift of the mind?

Probably all think it so, but those who possess - or fancy they possess - it. To hear them speak, you would believe that their hearts would be cold if that elixir did not flow about them; that their eyes would be dim if that flame did not refine their vision; that they would be lonely if this strange companion abandoned them. You would suppose that it imparted some glad hope to spring, some fine charm to summer, some tranquil joy to autumn, some consolation to winter, which you do not feel. An illusion, of course; but the fanatics cling to their dream, and would not give it for gold."

Charlotte also wrote to her publisher, when she was announcing the completion of Shirley:

"Whatever now becomes of the work, the occupation of writing it has been a boon to me. It took me out of dark and desolate reality into an unreal but happier region."

In a later letter to the same publisher, she wrote:

"The faculty of imagination lifted me when I was sinking, three months ago...I am thankful to God, who gave me this faculty; and it is for me a part of my religion to defend this gift and to profit by its possession."

During this time, her father's curate, the Reverend Arthur Bell Nicholls, had been spending a great deal of time with Patrick and Charlotte. It was not long before he proposed, and Charlotte accepted. They were married on the morning of Thursday, June 29, 1854. One year after the marriage, Charlotte died. The cause of her death was tuberculosis, and it is thought that complications in early pregnancy hastened the process.

Patrick Bronte ended up outliving his wife and six children. His only companion was Charlotte's husband, who looked after Charlotte's father, in compliance with Charlotte's last wishes. Patrick, at age 84, was the last of his family to die.

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Chronology

Brontë Family

<https://haworthguide.co.uk/bronte-sisters/timeline>

This Brontë timeline highlights key events in the lives of sisters Charlotte, Emily, and Anne, their brother Branwell, and their parents, Patrick and Maria, along with their aunt, Elizabeth Branwell who cared for them after their mother's death.

Key moments in their lives and literary careers are captured in this Brontë chronology, showcasing how these experiences shaped their remarkable contributions to literature.

Much credit goes to the now-defunct Haworth-Village website, where much of this timeline was first published.

02/12/1776

Elizabeth Branwell was born at Penzance in Cornwall, elder sister of Maria Branwell. She brought up the Brontë children after their mother, Maria Branwell (Brontë), died.

17/03/1777

Patrick Brontë was born at Emdale, Drumballyroney, County Down, Ireland.

15/04/1783

Maria Branwell was born at Penzance, Cornwall.

01/10/1802

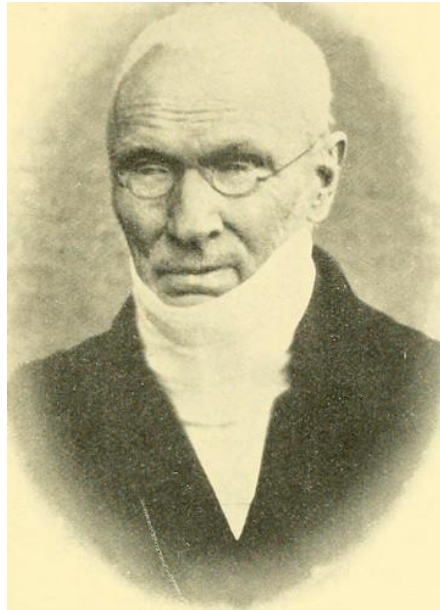
Patrick Brontë, aged 25, registered as a student at St John's College, Cambridge.

03/10/1802

Patrick Brontë, a student at St John's College, Cambridge, changed the spelling of his name from Brunty to Brontë.

23/04/1806

Patrick Brontë was awarded a Bachelor of Arts degree.



01/01/1809

Patrick Brontë conducted his last parish duty at St Mary Magdalene Church of Wethersfield in Essex, performing a burial. He had taken the post of curate in the autumn of 1806.

05/12/1809

Patrick Brontë began his curacy at Dewsbury.

29/09/1810

Elizabeth Gaskell, who wrote 'The Life of Charlotte Brontë', was born.

29/12/1812

Patrick Brontë and Maria Branwell were married at Guiseley Church.

23/04/1814

Maria Brontë, the first child of the Brontë family, was baptised at Hartshead.

08/02/1815

Elizabeth Brontë, second child of the Brontë family, was born at Hartshead.

19/05/1815

The Brontë family moved to the [Parsonage at Market Street, Thornton](#), Bradford.



26/08/1815

Elizabeth Brontë, the second child of the Brontë family, was baptised at Thornton.

21/04/1816

Charlotte Brontë, the third child of the Brontë family, was born at Thornton.

29/06/1816

Charlotte Brontë, the third child of the Brontë family, was baptised at Thornton.

26/02/1817

Mary Taylor, a close friend of Charlotte Brontë, was born.

26/06/1817

Patrick Branwell Brontë, the fourth child of the Brontë family, was born at Thornton.

30/07/1818

Emily Jane Brontë, the fifth child of the Brontë family, was born at Thornton.

20/08/1818

Emily Jane Brontë, the fifth child of the Brontë family, was baptised.

06/01/1819

Arthur Bell Nicholls was born in Killhead, County Antrim, Ireland. He would later become Charlotte Brontë's husband.

19/11/1819

The resignation of the Rev. Samuel Redhead from the Perpetual Curacy of Haworth was officially recorded by the Bradford Parish Clerk.

Redhead had the shortest tenure, lasting just three weeks due to local outrage that he was appointed without consulting the Trustees. Elizabeth Gaskell wrote:

"A man rode into the church upon an ass, with his face turned towards the tail, and as many old hats piled on his head, as he could possibly carry. He began urging his beast round the aisles, and the screams, and cries, and laughter of the congregation entirely drowned all sound of Mr. Redhead's voice; and, I believe, he was obliged to desist."

17/01/1820

Anne Brontë, the sixth child of the Brontë family, was born at Thornton.

25/02/1820

Patrick Brontë was granted perpetual curacy of Haworth.



25/03/1820

Anne Brontë, the sixth child of the Brontë family, was baptised at Thornton.

20/04/1820

The Brontë family moved from Thornton to [Haworth Parsonage](#). The procession of seven carts and one covered wagon traveled up Main St (then known as Kirkgate), ending at Parsonage Lane (now Church St).



21/01/1821

Maria Brontë, wife of Patrick Brontë, was diagnosed with cancer.

15/09/1821

Maria Brontë, wife of Patrick Brontë, died at Haworth, aged 38.

22/09/1821

Maria Brontë, wife of Patrick Brontë, was buried in the family vault at Haworth Parish Church. She had died on 15 September, aged 38.

27/11/1821

Patrick Brontë wrote:

"My dear wife was taken dangerously ill on the 29th of January last; and in a little more than seven months afterwards she died. During every week and almost every day of this long tedious interval I expected her final removal. I was left quite alone, unless you suppose my six little children and the nurse and servants to have been company."

21/04/1823

Patrick Brontë wrote to Mary Burder's mother in Wethersfield, Essex, explaining the past 14 years of his life and inquiring about her family.

His wife, Maria, had died in 1821. Patrick, who had met Mary Burder when he was curate of St. Mary Magdalene Church in Essex from 1806-1809, was struggling to cope alone with his six young children.

21/07/1824

The eldest Brontë girls, Maria and Elizabeth, were sent to the Clergy Daughters' School at Cowan Bridge.

10/08/1824

Charlotte Brontë was sent to the Clergy Daughters' School at Cowan Bridge.

25/11/1824

Emily Brontë was sent to the Clergy Daughters' School at Cowan Bridge.

06/05/1825

Maria Brontë, the first child of the Brontë family, died at Haworth of consumption at age 12.

01/06/1825

The Brontë sisters left the Clergy Daughters' School at Cowan Bridge, where conditions were described as disgusting and filthy.

15/06/1825

Elizabeth Brontë died at Haworth, aged 10.

18/06/1825

Elizabeth Brontë, aged 10, was buried at Haworth.

25/07/1825

Timothy Feather was baptised by Patrick Brontë. He later became known as the last handloom weaver and lived all his life in Stanbury.

05/07/1826

Patrick Brontë returned from Leeds and gave a box of toy soldiers to Branwell.

22/04/1828

Martha Brown, who later became a servant to the Brontë household, was born.

12/03/1829

"I am in the Kitchen of the Parsonage house Haworth. Tabby the servant is washing up after breakfast and Anne my youngest sister is kneeling on a chair looking at some cakes which Tabby has been baking for us. Emily is in the parlour brushing it, papa and Branwell are gone to Keighley. Aunt is up stairs in her room and I am sitting by the table writing this in the kitchen."

— Charlotte Brontë, The History of the Year



13/07/1830

A watercolour still life of wild roses was painted by Charlotte Brontë "from nature."

22/08/1830

Charlotte Brontë wrote her poem "Morning".

30/04/1833

Aunt Branwell, who raised the Brontë children, made her will. The money helped finance the early publications of Charlotte, Emily, and Anne.

24/11/1834

Emily Brontë wrote:

"I fed Rainbow, Diamond, Snowflake, Jasper pheasant alias this morning. Branwell went down to Mr. Driver's and brought news that Sir Robert Peel was going to be invited to stand for Leeds. Anne and I have been peeling apples for Charlotte to make an apple pudding... Taby said just now, 'Come Anne pillopatate...'"

29/07/1835

Charlotte Brontë went as a teacher to Miss Wooler's school at Roe Head. Emily accompanied her as a pupil.

01/02/1836

Branwell Brontë was proposed as a Freemason.

29/02/1836

Branwell Brontë became a full member of the Three Graces Lodge in Haworth.

22/02/1837

A meeting was held in the Sunday School rooms, chaired by Patrick Brontë, to repeal the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834.

12/03/1837

Charlotte Brontë received a letter from Robert Southey, the Poet Laureate: "Literature cannot be the business of a woman's life: & it ought not to be."

07/08/1837

Emily Brontë wrote her poem "O God of Heaven! The dream of horror".

14/05/1838

Branwell Brontë wrote his poem "At dead of midnight drearily".

04/12/1838

Emily Brontë wrote the poem:

"A little while, a little while, The noisy crowd are barred away; And I can sing and I can smile A little while I've holiday!"

18/12/1838

Emily Brontë wrote her poem "The Bluebell".

12/01/1839

Emily Brontë wrote the poem "The night was dark yet winter breathed...."

26/03/1839

Charlotte Brontë wrote her poem "Life".

08/04/1839

Anne Brontë became governess for the Ingham family at Blake Hall, Mirfield.

12/07/1839

Emily Brontë wrote her poem "And now the house-dog stretched once more".

30/09/1839

Emily Brontë wrote the poem "The organ swells the trumpets sound".

14/11/1839

Emily Brontë wrote the poem "Well, some may hate, and some may scorn, And some may quite forget thy name...".

06/01/1840

Emily Brontë wrote the poem "Thy son is near meridian height, and my sun sinks in endless night...".

14/02/1840

William Weightman, Patrick Brontë's curate, sent Valentines to the three Brontë sisters—the first they had ever received.

31/08/1840

Branwell Brontë was appointed Assistant Clerk at Sowerby Bridge Railway Station near Halifax. His starting salary was £75 a year.

01/03/1841

Emily Brontë wrote her poem "Riches I hold in light esteem and Love I laugh to scorn...".

02/03/1841

Charlotte Brontë became a governess for the White family who lived at Upperwood House, Rawdon, near Bradford.

01/04/1841

Branwell Brontë was employed as Clerk in Charge of Luddenden Foot station near Hebden Bridge. While there he was known to frequent the Lord Nelson Tavern.

16/07/1841

Emily Brontë wrote her poem "Aye, there it is! It wakes tonight".

12/12/1841

Charlotte Brontë wrote her poem "Passion".

08/02/1842

Charlotte and Emily Brontë began their journey to Brussels to stay at the Pensionnat Heger, a finishing school run by the Heger family. Patrick Brontë travelled with them on the journey.

31/03/1842

Branwell Brontë was dismissed from his post as Clerk in Charge of Luddenden Foot station near Hebden Bridge. There was a deficit in the station accounts attributed to Branwell Brontë's incompetence rather than theft.

14/08/1842

William Weightman, Patrick Brontë's curate, performed his last duty at Haworth. He had been visiting the sick and was taken ill with cholera; he died on 6th September 1842.

06/09/1842

William Weightman aged 26, who was Patrick Brontë's curate, died of cholera, the disease was prevalent in Haworth at the time.

"He was three years curate of Haworth and by the Congregation and Parishioners in general was greatly respected for his orthodox principles, active zeal, moral habits, learning, mildness and affability. His useful labours will long be gratefully remembered by the members of the Congregation and Sunday School Teachers and Scholars."

10/09/1842

William Weightman, Patrick Brontë's curate, was buried. He had died of cholera on 6th September, the disease was prevalent in Haworth at the time.

02/10/1842

A memorial service was given by Patrick Brontë in memory of William Weightman, who had died of cholera on 6th September. Patrick Brontë had loved him as a son.

29/10/1842

Elizabeth Branwell, aunt to the Brontë children who brought them up, died aged 66.

03/11/1842

Elizabeth Branwell, aunt to the Brontë children who brought them up, was buried at Haworth. She had died aged 66 on 29th October.

10/11/1842

Anne Brontë wrote her poem "To Cowper".

26/12/1842

Branwell Brontë attended his last meeting as a Mason of the Three Graces Lodge in Haworth.

30/03/1843

Branwell Brontë wrote his poem "Thorpe Green".

04/08/1843

Charlotte Brontë's tutor M. Heger presented her with a wood fragment from Napoleon's coffin.

04/10/1843

Patrick Brontë wrote to the Church trustees about the rumour in Haworth village regarding the lotion he was using for his weak eyesight. Gossip had circulated that the smell was similar to alcohol.

31/10/1843

Anne Brontë wrote her poem "The Captive Dove".

29/12/1843

Charlotte Brontë received a Diploma from the Pensionnat at Brussels.

01/01/1844

Charlotte Brontë left the Pensionnat at Brussels for home. While studying there she had received a Diploma.

03/01/1844

Charlotte Brontë arrived back home at Haworth Parsonage; she had been studying at the Heger's Pensionnat at Brussels.

11/03/1844

Emily Brontë wrote her poem "The Wanderer from the Fold".

01/05/1844

Emily Brontë wrote a poem "The linnet in the rocky dells, The moor-lark in the air...".

18/01/1845

Anne and Branwell Brontë returned to their employment as tutors for the Robinson family at Thorp Green.

03/02/1845

Emily Brontë wrote her poem "The Philosopher".

03/03/1845

Emily Brontë wrote her poem "Remembrance".

10/04/1845

Emily Brontë wrote her poem "Death".

14/04/1845

Emily Brontë wrote the poem Stars: "...All through the night, your glorious eyes were gazing down in mine,...".

18/05/1845

The Reverend Arthur Bell Nicholls aged 26 was appointed Curate at Haworth with a salary of £100 per annum. He married Charlotte Brontë in 1854.

20/05/1845

Anne Brontë wrote her poem "If this be all".

18/06/1845

Branwell Brontë returned to his employment as tutor with the Robinson family at Thorp Green. While there he had an affair with Mrs Robinson.

17/07/1845

Branwell Brontë was dismissed from his post as tutor for the Robinson family at Thorp Green. It had been discovered that while there, he had an affair with Mrs Robinson.

02/01/1846

Emily Brontë wrote her poem "No coward soul is mine, No trembler in the world's storm-troubled sphere...".

06/02/1846

Charlotte Brontë sent a manuscript of poems to Messrs. Aylott and Jones publishers. They used the pseudonym of Acton, Currer and Ellis Bell.

06/04/1846

Charlotte Brontë wrote to publisher Aylott & Jones: "C.E & A Bell are now preparing for the Press a work of fiction - consisting of three distinct and unconnected tales which may be published together as a work of 3 vols. of ordinary novel-size, or separately as single vols - as shall be deemed most advisable."

09/04/1846

Branwell Brontë visited the Halifax Guardian and placed an advert for a post that would take him abroad.

07/05/1846

First printed copies of the Book of "Poems" by Charlotte, Emily and Anne Brontë arrived at the Parsonage. They had used the pseudonym of Acton, Currer and Ellis Bell.

26/05/1846

Mrs Robinson's husband died; she had a relationship with Branwell Brontë, and news of the death gave Branwell hope of marriage.

04/07/1846

The published Brontë Poems using the pseudonym of Acton, Currer and Ellis Bell received favourable criticism. Only two copies were sold.

26/08/1846

Surgeons performed an operation on Patrick Brontë's cataracts at Manchester. The operation was successful, and after a month convalescing, he was able to read again.

14/09/1846

Emily Brontë wrote the poem "Why ask to know the date – the clime?".

13/12/1846

Branwell Brontë, through heavy drinking, had incurred debts. Officers charged him to pay the debt off or go to prison. The Brontë family had to bail him out.



15/12/1846

Charlotte Brontë wrote: "I hope you are not frozen up; the cold here is dreadful. I do not remember such a series of North-Pole days. England might really have taken a slide up into the Arctic Zone; the sky looks like ice; the earth is frozen; the wind is as keen as a two-edged blade."

25/12/1846

Music I love--but never strain
Could kindle raptures so divine,
So grief assuage, so conquer pain,
And rouse this pensive heart of mine--
As that we hear on Christmas morn,
Upon the wintry breezes borne.....

Music On Christmas Morning - Poem by Anne Brontë, published in the 1846 collection Poems By Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell under Anne's nom de plume 'Acton Bell'.

04/07/1847

The manuscripts of Emily Brontë's Wuthering Heights and Anne's Agnes Grey were sent to the publishers; T.C. Newby. They were published in December 1847.

15/07/1847

Charlotte Brontë sent the manuscript of the "Professor" to the publisher Smith, Elder and Co. Cornhill. It was not published.

24/08/1847

Charlotte Brontë's manuscript of Jane Eyre was sent to the publisher Smith, Elder and Co. Cornhill.

16/10/1847

Charlotte Brontë's novel 'Jane Eyre' was published under the pseudonym Currer Bell.

19/10/1847

Charlotte Brontë received copies of her published novel 'Jane Eyre'.

10/12/1847

Charlotte Brontë received payment for her novel Jane Eyre, which was published on 16th October 1847.

14/12/1847

Emily and Anne received six published copies of their novels, Wuthering Heights and Agnes Grey, from their publishers.

08/07/1848

Charlotte and Anne Brontë visited London to meet their publisher and revealed their true identity. The Brontë sisters had been using the pseudonyms Acton, Currer, and Bell.

22/07/1848

Anne Brontë finished the preface to the second edition of her novel, The Tenant of Wildfell Hall.

28/09/1848

Branwell Brontë was buried in the family vault at Haworth Parish Church. He had died on 24th September, aged 31. The service was conducted by William Morgan.

16/11/1848

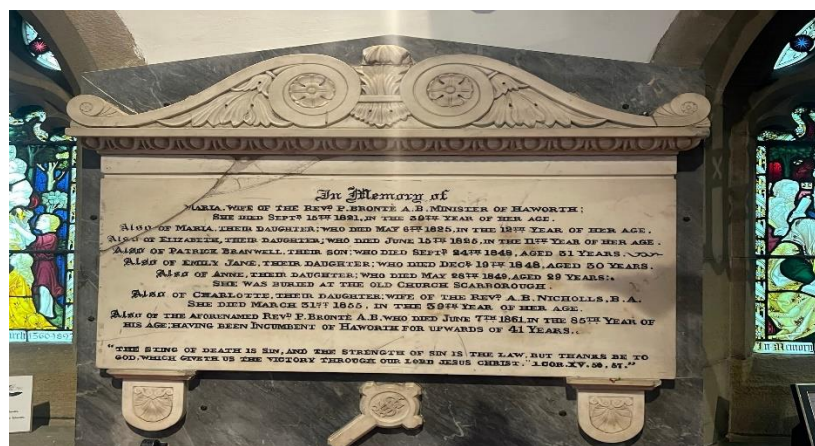
Emily Brontë's health was poor. Charlotte Brontë wrote of her sister having difficulty breathing and pains in her chest.

19/12/1848

Emily Brontë died at 2 o'clock in the afternoon. She was 30 years old.

22/12/1848

Emily Brontë was buried in the family vault at Haworth Parish Church. She had died on 19th December, aged 30.



05/01/1849

Anne Brontë caught influenza; consumption was diagnosed in both lungs.

24/05/1849

Charlotte and Anne Brontë went to Scarborough with Ellen Nussey. Anne's health was declining.

28/05/1849

Anne Brontë died at 2 o'clock in the afternoon, aged 29, at Scarborough.

30/05/1849

Anne Brontë was buried at St Mary's Churchyard, Castle Hill, Scarborough. She had died on 28th May, aged 29.

28/08/1849

The lack of fresh water in Haworth was a concern. Patrick Brontë had prepared a petition which was sent to the General Board of Health in London in an effort to improve sanitation.

29/08/1849

Charlotte Brontë completed her novel Shirley.

09/10/1849

Patrick Brontë sent a second petition to the General Board of Health in London about the poor sanitation in Haworth.

26/10/1849

Charlotte Brontë's novel Shirley was published under the pseudonym Currer Bell.

05/02/1850

Patrick Brontë wrote to the General Board of Health in London asking them to survey the water supply in Haworth.

02/04/1850

Benjamin Herschel Babbage travelled to Haworth to examine the sanitary condition of the village on behalf of the General Board of Health.

04/04/1850

Benjamin Herschel Babbage, Inspector of the General Board of Health in London, opened his investigation on the state of the water supply in Haworth. His report found the sanitation was poor, with open sewers coursing down Main St and water leaching from the graveyard into the main source of drinking water.

27/04/1850

Patrick Brontë wrote: "I have been rather uneasy by information from Mr Nicholls, respecting a path leading through the Church lands to the Mill."

22/05/1850

Charlotte Brontë wrote of her dead sister Emily Brontë: "For my part, I am free to walk on the moors - but when I go out there alone - everything reminds me of the times when others were with me and then the moors seem a wilderness, featureless, solitary, saddening - My sister Emily had a particular love for them, and there is not a

knoll of heather, not a branch of fern, not a young bilberry leaf, not a fluttering lark or linnet but reminds me of her."

09/06/1850

Charlotte Brontë met the Duke of Wellington at the Chapel Royal, London.

13/06/1850

Charlotte Brontë sat for her portrait, drawn by the artist George Redmond.

09/06/1851

Charlotte Brontë wrote to her father about her visit to the Great Exhibition: "Yesterday I went for the second time to the Crystal Palace. We remained in it about three hours, and I must say I was more struck with it on this occasion than at my first visit. It is a wonderful place – vast, strange, new, and impossible to describe. Its grandeur does not consist in one thing, but in the unique assemblage of all things. Whatever human industry has created you find there, from the great compartments filled with railway engines and boilers, with mill machinery in full work, with splendid carriages of all kinds, with harness of every description, to the glass-covered and velvet-spread stands loaded with the most gorgeous work of the goldsmith and silversmith, and the carefully guarded caskets full of real diamonds and pearls worth hundreds of thousands of pounds."

08/09/1851

Patrick Brontë wrote again to the General Board of Health regarding sanitation in Haworth: "Yet after tedious delay, they have, as far as we know, done almost nothing - We might have thought that this arose from a press of more urgent business, had it not been that we have learned from good authority that their salutary rules have been adopted and enforced in various other places where there was less necessity for them."

29/03/1852

Charlotte Brontë completed the first draft of her novel "Villette".

23/05/1852

Charlotte Brontë visited Filey, staying at the same lodgings she and Ellen Nussey had after Anne's death. Charlotte went to visit Anne's grave and discovered a number of errors on the gravestone, particularly Anne's age; the date on the stone is 28, but she was 29 when she died.

13/12/1852

Arthur Bell Nicholls proposed to Charlotte Brontë. Charlotte informed her father, who was not pleased about the marriage proposal. She wrote to Nicholls rejecting him.

28/01/1853

Charlotte Brontë's novel Villette was published.

31/01/1853

Patrick Brontë wrote a reference on behalf of A.B. Nicholls to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, stating that Nicholls had been his curate for seven years and had 'behaved himself wisely, soberly, and piously.' Nicholls had applied to the SPG for a missionary post in Australia after Charlotte turned down his proposal of marriage.

23/02/1853

A.B. Nicholls wrote to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel enquiring whether his application for a missionary posting had been received, as he had not had a reply.

25/05/1853

Revd. A. B. Nicholls was presented with a pocket watch, with the inscription: "Presented to the Revd. A. B. Nicholls by the teachers, scholars, and congregation of St Michael's, Haworth, Yorkshire, May 25th 1853".

19/09/1853

Elizabeth Gaskell, who wrote "The Life of Charlotte Brontë", visited Charlotte Brontë at Haworth.

11/04/1854

Arthur Bell Nicholls proposed to Charlotte Brontë again, and she accepted.

28/04/1854

Patrick Brontë wrote a testimonial for William Brown, asserting his competence as a sexton.

29/06/1854

Charlotte Brontë and Arthur Bell Nicholls were married at Haworth Church at 8.00 am in the morning.

01/08/1854

Charlotte Brontë and Arthur Bell Nicholls returned to Haworth from their honeymoon in Ireland.

29/11/1854

Charlotte Brontë and her husband Arthur Nicholls walked to what is now known as [the Brontë Waterfalls](#). Charlotte had wished to see the waterfall in all its glory, as heavy rain and melting snow had turned the water into a "perfect torrent".



30/01/1855

Charlotte Brontë was examined by Dr Mc Turk and was found to be pregnant.

17/02/1855

Tabitha Ackroyd "Tabby", faithful servant of the Brontë family, died aged 85. She did not marry or have children, and she is recorded on the 1851 census as "Unmarried".

21/02/1855

Tabitha Ackroyd "Tabby", faithful servant of the Brontë family, was buried at Haworth aged 85. She had died on 17th February 1855 and did not marry or have any children.

31/03/1855

Charlotte Brontë died at Haworth at the age of 38.

There's no use in weeping,
Though we are condemned to part:
There's such a thing as keeping
A remembrance in one's heart:

Parting by Charlotte Brontë

04/04/1855

Charlotte Brontë was buried in the family vault at Haworth Parish Church. She had died on 31st March, aged 38.



20/06/1855

Patrick Brontë made his own will.

23/07/1855

Elizabeth Gaskell visited Haworth to meet Patrick Brontë to discuss the biography of Charlotte Brontë.

13/08/1855

John Brown was buried in the churchyard. Arthur Nicholls officiated, and Patrick Brontë sat with Mrs. Mary Brown and Martha Brown in the Brontë pew.

02/10/1856

Elizabeth Gaskell wrote of Charlotte Brontë: "Leaving all authorship on one side, her character as a woman was unusual to the point of being unique. I never heard or read of anyone who was for an instant, or in any respect, to be compared to her. And everything she did and every word she said and wrote bore the impress of this remarkable character."

07/02/1857

The manuscript of the "Life of Charlotte Brontë" by Elizabeth Gaskell was completed.

24/02/1857

Patrick Brontë carried out his last marriage service at Haworth Church.

25/03/1857

The "Life of Charlotte Brontë" by Elizabeth Gaskell was published.

06/06/1857

Charlotte Brontë's previously rejected novel "The Professor" was published.

21/08/1857

With regard to the statement that Mr Brontë, in his desire to bring up his children simply and heartily, refused to permit them to eat flesh meat, he asserts that Nancy Garr alleges that the children had meat daily, and as much food as they chose. The early article from which they were restrained was butter, but its absence was compensated for by what is known in Yorkshire as "spice-cake," a type of bread that is the staple food at Christmas for all meals but dinner. "I did not know that I had an enemy in the world, much less one who would traduce me before my death. Everything in that book 'the biography of his daughter' which relates to my conduct to my family is either false or distorted. I never did commit such acts as are ascribed to me. I stated this in a letter which I sent to Mrs Gaskell, requesting her at the same time to cancel the false statements about me in the next edition of her book. To this I received no other answer than that Mrs Gaskell was unwell, and unable to write."

Extract printed in the Daily News England, Friday, August 21, 1857

30/10/1859

Patrick Brontë preached his last sermon from the pulpit of Haworth Church.

07/06/1861

Patrick Brontë died at Haworth. He was 84.

12/06/1861

Patrick Brontë was buried in the family vault at Haworth Church. He had died on 7th June, aged 84.

01/10/1861

The auction of Brontë household items took place in Haworth.

25/08/1864

Arthur Bell Nicholls married again.

12/11/1865

Elizabeth Gaskell, who wrote 'The Life of Charlotte Brontë', died.

16/11/1865

Elizabeth Gaskell, who wrote 'The Life of Charlotte Brontë', was buried at Brook Street Chapel in Knutsford. She had died on November 12th, 1865.

18/10/1879

Mr James Ackroyd put up for auction the wood taken from the demolished Brontë Church. The bulk of it did not fetch the price of even ordinary wood, and some of the best oak beams were reserved. Several pieces had been disposed of at fancy prices prior to the sale.

19/01/1880

Martha Brown, servant of the Brontës, died aged 52.

26/03/1886

Nancy Garrs died. In 1816, she was employed by Patrick Brontë to help raise his children. She is buried in an unmarked grave at Undercliffe Cemetery.

09/01/1890

Mme Heger died in Brussels. The family ran the Pensionnat Heger, a finishing school in Brussels that Charlotte and Emily Brontë had attended.

01/03/1893

Mary Taylor, a close friend of Charlotte Brontë, died.

16/12/1893

The Brontë Society was founded in Bradford. The first meeting took place in Bradford Town Hall on December 16th at 3 PM, attended by more than 50 people.

18/05/1895

The first Brontë Museum opened on the upper floor of the Yorkshire Penny Bank at Haworth. The building is now the Tourist Information Centre.

26/11/1897

Ellen Nussey, Charlotte Brontë's lifelong friend, died aged 80.

02/12/1906

Arthur Bell Nicholls, husband of Charlotte Brontë, died. He was 87.

02/02/1909

"Dr Wilson says the Rev. John Wade Mr Story's predecessor told him that when the Church was rebuilt in 1880 all bodies were removed from the interior of the Church keeping that of Mr Charnock and those of the Brontë family. Rev P.B lies about the chancel steps and Charlotte Emily etc under the large pillar on the right. Vault covered with concrete for foundation of pillar."

05/03/1914

The portrait of Charlotte, Emily and Anne Brontë, painted by Branwell Brontë, was exhibited for the first time at the National Portrait Gallery. It had been presumed lost. After Charlotte Brontë died, her husband Rev. Nichols took the picture to Ireland. In 1914 it was discovered folded in a cupboard; the creases are visible on the picture.



04/08/1928

The Parsonage at Haworth was officially handed over to the Brontë Society.

14/06/1929

Probably the only living school-fellow of the Brontë sisters, Mr John Rushworth, a retired cartwright of Denholme, Yorks will shortly enter his 96th year.

10/08/1929

"The manuscript of Charlotte Brontë's "The Violet" was sold at Sotheby's on Monday for £250."

24/04/1939

James Roosevelt, the son of US President Franklin D. Roosevelt, visited the Parsonage.

19/05/1989

The Brontë bridge was destroyed by a flash flood. It was rebuilt in 1990.

23/07/1997

Ann Crier MP (Keighley 1997 - 2010) gave [a speech](#) to the House of Commons about her concern over the condition of [Top Withens](#).



10/04/2013

Charlotte Brontë's "I've been wandering in the greenwoods," dated 14 December 1829, written when she was just 13 sold at auction for £92,450.

April 2024

The terraced house in Thornton, Bradford, in which the Brontë siblings were born becomes under public ownership after a community group raise funds to secure it.



Also, visit this Web Link:

<https://brontesisters.co.uk/timeline.html>

Bronte Parsonage Museum

<https://www.annebronte.org/2024/08/04/the-bronte-parsonage-museum-then-and-now/>

This week marked some important anniversaries in the Brontë story – the 30th July was the anniversary of the birth of Emily Brontë (and, exactly 140 years later) of Kate Bush who will always be linked to her thanks to a certain song. Today marks another date to remember, as it was on this day in 1928 that the Brontë Parsonage Museum in Haworth first opened its doors to the public. That's why I headed to Haworth this week, and why today's post looks at the Brontë Parsonage Museum – past and present.

To start with, let's fire up our time machines and head back to the 4th August 1928. If you were in Haworth on this day you would have been met with huge crowds stretching up Church Lane and down the cobbled Main Street – people were in their finery, so bowler and cloche hats were in abundance. What was drawing them there? The official opening of the Brontë Museum in what had, until then, been an active parsonage building belonging to the Church of England. This picture taken on that day captures the crowd perfectly:



The Bronte Parsonage Museum opening, 1928

If we had been there that day we would have seen two of the great benefactors of the museum on the podium facing the large assembly of well-wishers: Sir James Roberts and Sir Edward Brotherton. Both are

working class northerners who had become successful industrialists, and had used their wealth to share their love of the Brontës with the public. Sir James was born in Haworth, in the same week that Branwell Brontë died, and he still had vivid memories of Patrick Brontë, of Arthur Bell Nicholls and Martha Brown. It is Sir James who bought the parsonage building from the Church of England and immediately gifted it to the Brontë Society, allowing them to open it to the public. Sir Edward had built up a vast collection of Brontë memorabilia, alongside other literary gems, and he has gifted a large part of it to this new museum and to Leeds University – where it is now housed in the magnificent Brotherton Library.

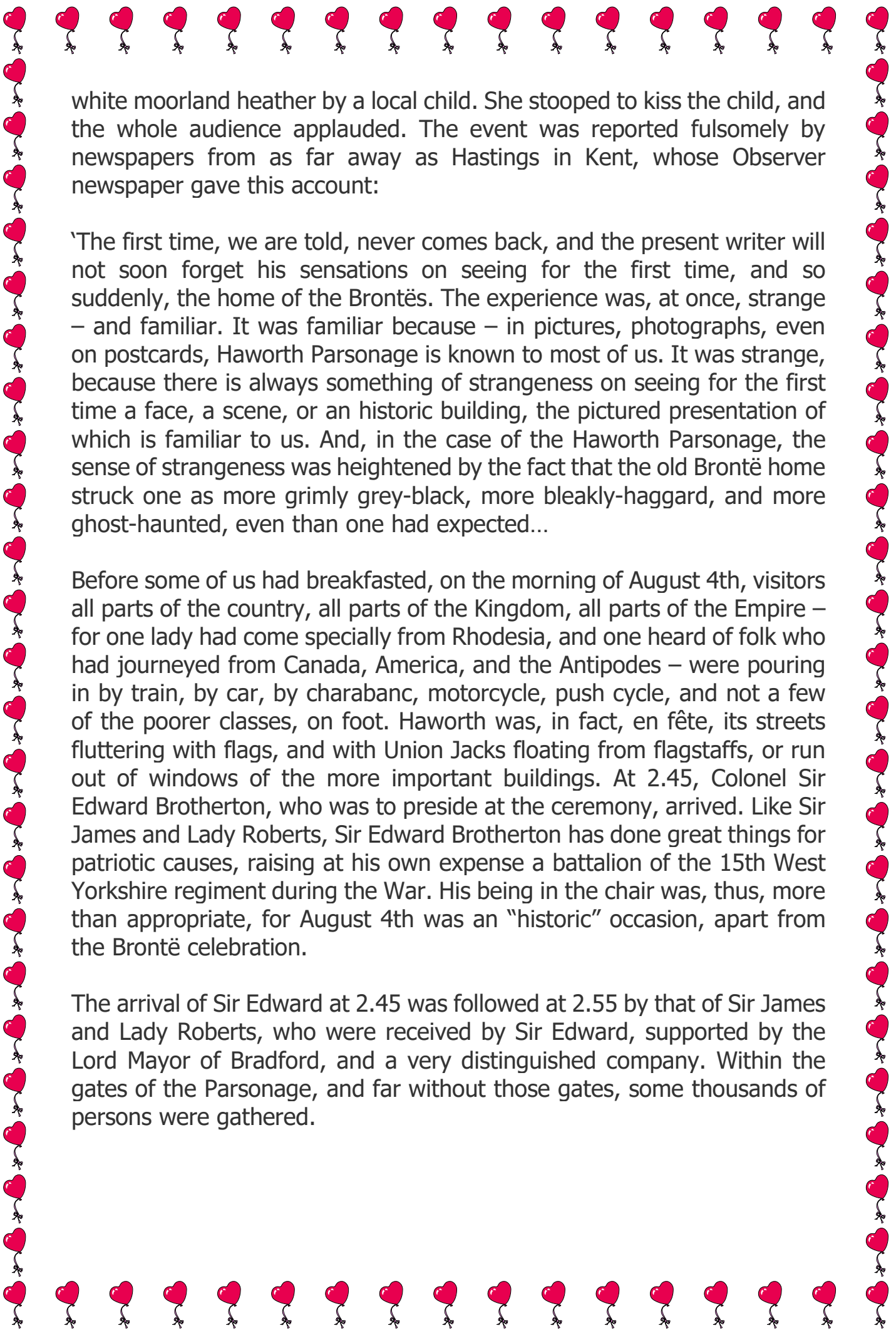


View of the platform during Sir James Roberts's address at the opening of the Brontë Parsonage Museum and Library last Saturday at Haworth. Among those included in the picture are Sir Edward Brotherton (seated next to Sir James), Lady Roberts, the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress of Bradford, the Mayor and Mayoress of Keighley, Mr. Coulson Kernahan (on Sir James's left), and Mr. J. A. Symington (in the centre at the back).

Graph: G. Crowther, Keighley.

Other notable people who thrilled the crowd were Mr and Mrs Branwell and Captain Arthur Branwell, the cousins once and twice removed of the Brontës and last surviving members of the Branwell family of Penzance who had provided the Brontë motherline. Another man presented to the crowd is Mr Holland, grandson of Charlotte Brontë's friend and biographer Elizabeth Gaskell.

Perhaps the most moving and spontaneous aspect of the ceremony comes when Lady Roberts, wife of Sir James, was presented with a bouquet of

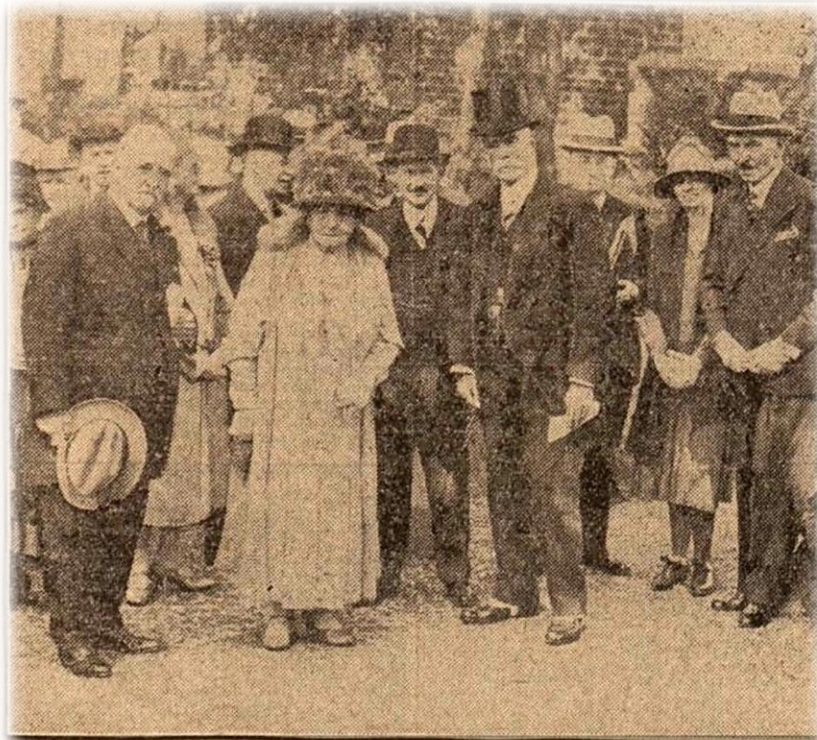


white moorland heather by a local child. She stooped to kiss the child, and the whole audience applauded. The event was reported fulsomely by newspapers from as far away as Hastings in Kent, whose Observer newspaper gave this account:

'The first time, we are told, never comes back, and the present writer will not soon forget his sensations on seeing for the first time, and so suddenly, the home of the Brontës. The experience was, at once, strange – and familiar. It was familiar because – in pictures, photographs, even on postcards, Haworth Parsonage is known to most of us. It was strange, because there is always something of strangeness on seeing for the first time a face, a scene, or an historic building, the pictured presentation of which is familiar to us. And, in the case of the Haworth Parsonage, the sense of strangeness was heightened by the fact that the old Brontë home struck one as more grimly grey-black, more bleakly-haggard, and more ghost-haunted, even than one had expected...

Before some of us had breakfasted, on the morning of August 4th, visitors all parts of the country, all parts of the Kingdom, all parts of the Empire – for one lady had come specially from Rhodesia, and one heard of folk who had journeyed from Canada, America, and the Antipodes – were pouring in by train, by car, by charabanc, motorcycle, push cycle, and not a few of the poorer classes, on foot. Haworth was, in fact, en fête, its streets fluttering with flags, and with Union Jacks floating from flagstaffs, or run out of windows of the more important buildings. At 2.45, Colonel Sir Edward Brotherton, who was to preside at the ceremony, arrived. Like Sir James and Lady Roberts, Sir Edward Brotherton has done great things for patriotic causes, raising at his own expense a battalion of the 15th West Yorkshire regiment during the War. His being in the chair was, thus, more than appropriate, for August 4th was an "historic" occasion, apart from the Brontë celebration.

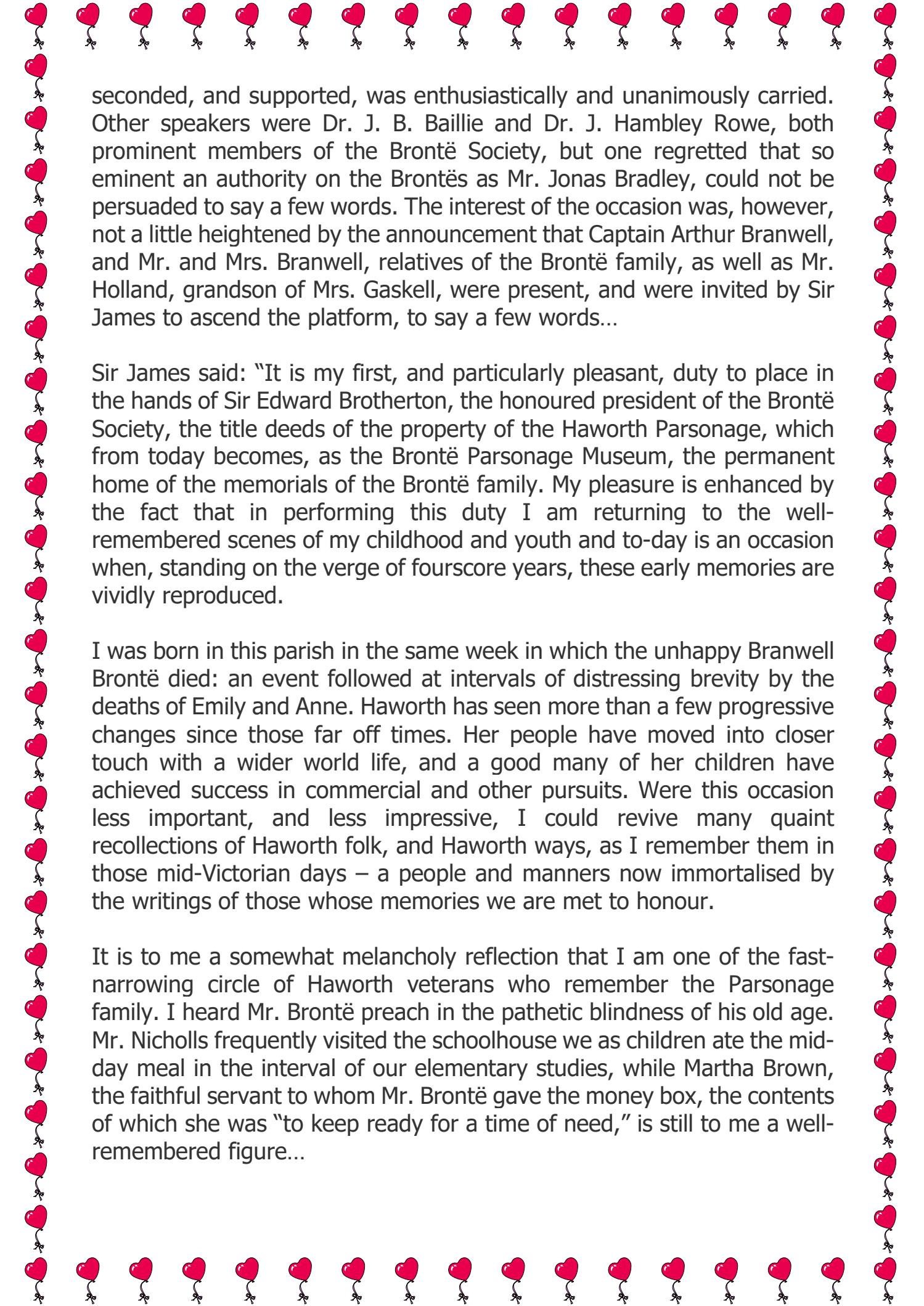
The arrival of Sir Edward at 2.45 was followed at 2.55 by that of Sir James and Lady Roberts, who were received by Sir Edward, supported by the Lord Mayor of Bradford, and a very distinguished company. Within the gates of the Parsonage, and far without those gates, some thousands of persons were gathered.



Sir Edward Brotherton (left), Lady Roberts, Sir James Roberts (the donor) and other leading people who took part in the opening of the Brontë Museum in the Old Parsonage at

After Sir James had handed the title deeds of the Parsonage to Sir Edward, and the latter had eloquently, and gracefully made acknowledgement, little Catherine Butler Wood (daughter of the accomplished scholar and author, who is editor of the Brontë Society publications) presented Lady Roberts with a bouquet of white moorland heather. When Lady Roberts, in her gentle and gracious way, stooped to kiss the child (as did Sir James), this little "human touch" called forth enthusiastic hurrahs, and even cheers. The applause was no less enthusiastic when Sir Edward Brotherton claimed that the Brontë Society now had a museum which would bear comparison with those established in honour of Victor Hugo, Walter Scott and Robert Burns.

Next Sir Edward invited Lady Roberts to open the Parsonage, which she did with a golden key presented by the architect, Mr W. A. Ledgard, who, later, made a speech which, next to that of Sir Edward Brotherton and Sir James Roberts, was by far the most memorable oration from anyone present. Lord Haldane, who intended to be present at the ceremony, but was prevented by illness [a former Lord Chancellor, Haldane died suddenly two weeks later], sent a written and very striking tribute to the Brontës, which was read by Canon Egerton Leigh. Then came the vote of thanks to Sir James and Lady Roberts, which after it had been proposed,



seconded, and supported, was enthusiastically and unanimously carried. Other speakers were Dr. J. B. Baillie and Dr. J. Hambley Rowe, both prominent members of the Brontë Society, but one regretted that so eminent an authority on the Brontës as Mr. Jonas Bradley, could not be persuaded to say a few words. The interest of the occasion was, however, not a little heightened by the announcement that Captain Arthur Branwell, and Mr. and Mrs. Branwell, relatives of the Brontë family, as well as Mr. Holland, grandson of Mrs. Gaskell, were present, and were invited by Sir James to ascend the platform, to say a few words...

Sir James said: "It is my first, and particularly pleasant, duty to place in the hands of Sir Edward Brotherton, the honoured president of the Brontë Society, the title deeds of the property of the Haworth Parsonage, which from today becomes, as the Brontë Parsonage Museum, the permanent home of the memorials of the Brontë family. My pleasure is enhanced by the fact that in performing this duty I am returning to the well-remembered scenes of my childhood and youth and to-day is an occasion when, standing on the verge of fourscore years, these early memories are vividly reproduced.

I was born in this parish in the same week in which the unhappy Branwell Brontë died: an event followed at intervals of distressing brevity by the deaths of Emily and Anne. Haworth has seen more than a few progressive changes since those far off times. Her people have moved into closer touch with a wider world life, and a good many of her children have achieved success in commercial and other pursuits. Were this occasion less important, and less impressive, I could revive many quaint recollections of Haworth folk, and Haworth ways, as I remember them in those mid-Victorian days – a people and manners now immortalised by the writings of those whose memories we are met to honour.

It is to me a somewhat melancholy reflection that I am one of the fast-narrowing circle of Haworth veterans who remember the Parsonage family. I heard Mr. Brontë preach in the pathetic blindness of his old age. Mr. Nicholls frequently visited the schoolhouse we as children ate the mid-day meal in the interval of our elementary studies, while Martha Brown, the faithful servant to whom Mr. Brontë gave the money box, the contents of which she was "to keep ready for a time of need," is still to me a well-remembered figure...



Martha Brown, remembered by Sir James Roberts

I remember Mr. Brontë as a man most tolerant to divergencies of religious conviction. Above all these memorabilia there rises before me the frail and unforgettable figure of Charlotte Brontë, who more than once stopped to speak a kindly word to the little lad who now stands a patriarch before you. I remember her funeral one Easter-tide, and some six years afterwards that of her father. These early associations, still very dear to me, were followed in after years by exceeding delight in those creations of imaginative genius which Charlotte and her sisters have left to us. Read, and many times re-read, they have often delighted the leisure hour and released the mind from the embarrassing and strenuous labours of a protracted and industrial career...

I am no authority in literary criticism but I do think, and I have always thought, that the realistic art of the Brontës makes unique appeal, and interprets itself with peculiar vividness to those whose nativity was amongst the scenes they have so graphically portrayed. I humbly stand in the ranks of the unnumbered and world-wide multitude who have found not only delight but inspiration from these sisters, who, encumbered with many adversities, rose to such great and shining heights of endeavour and discovered to the world their extraordinary literary powers. Those gifts, matured within these walls, and under the wide horizon of the Haworth Moor, have made of our little moorland village a shrine to which pilgrims from many lands wend every year their way"...

Out of these solitudes, far removed, from the vigorous and inspiring lives of the cities, there shone forth the luminous genius of three illustrious women. The presentation of these title deeds is to me an act of homage, alike to their genius, and to the nobility of their courageous lives.'



Patrick Brontë's study

A beautiful account, and the Brontë Parsonage Museum is just as breathtaking today. I was there on Friday, and it now owes special thanks to another great benefactor. There are some exhibits that I have never seen on display before – and some of them come thanks to the beneficence of Sir Leonard Blavatnik, who saved many Brontë items for the nation recently when they were at risk of being auctioned and never seen again.



Branwell Brontë above Emily's couch

Next week I will bring you a report of this year's new Brontë exhibition, 'Web Of Childhood', but for now I present some of the pictures I took this week of some of the ground floor rooms within the parsonage.



Charlotte Brontë's writing desk

I hope to see you again next week for another new Brontë blog post, and I hope you have a sunny happy week, wherever you are.

The Dining Room

A late autumn afternoon, 1826

The Brontë children have just come back from a walk to Ponden Hall, with their dog, Grasper. They liked the chill in the air, and the smell of bonfires, but now



Drawing of Grasper by Emily, 1834

they are glad to be sat by the fire, warming their feet on the fender. The shutters are drawn and the candles lit, and Grasper quietly snores on the rug, paws twitching.

Charlotte has a memory of their mother playing here with Branwell when he was a baby. Branwell,

Emily and Anne were too young to remember their mother, but they like to hear Charlotte's stories about her. But Charlotte doesn't remember very much, so she mostly makes things up. Her brother and sisters listen and Emily makes shadow shapes with her hands in the candle light upon the wall.

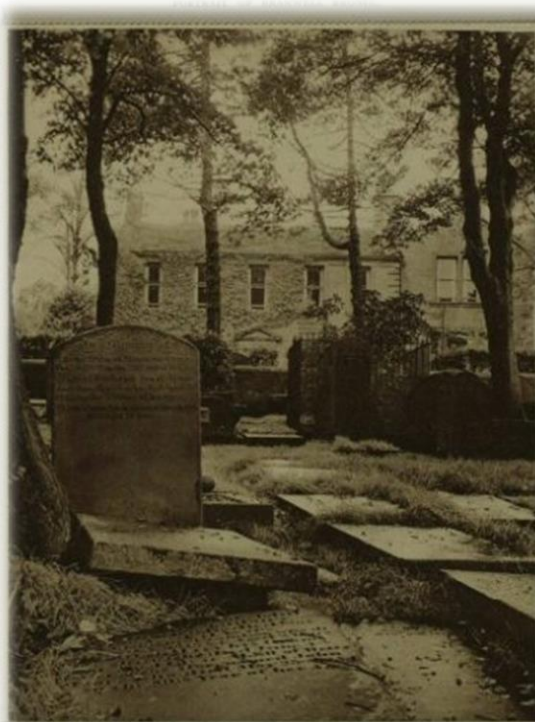
THE BRONTËS'
Web of Childhood



THE ROOM WHERE EMILY BRONTË DIED



Mr. JAMES ROOSEVELT, son of the American President, made friends with Eric Mitchell (the caretaker's three-year-old son) during a visit to Haworth Parsonage Museum. Also in the picture is Dr. Mabel Edgerley (secretary of the Brontë Society).



HAWORTH PARSONAGE, THE HOME OF THE BRONTËS: THE HOUSE WAS SMALLER AND MUCH MORE BARE WHEN THEY LIVED THERE, AND THE TWO CENTRAL TREES, PLANTED BY CHARLOTTE, HAVE GROWN TALL.



THE HALL-WAY OF THE PARSONAGE, UNCHANGED SINCE THE BRONTËS' DAY. THE DOOR ON THE RIGHT WAS THEIR FATHER'S STUDY, AND ACROSS FROM IT THE DINING-ROOM WHERE THE SISTERS WROTE THEIR BOOKS.



In the moorland parsonage at Haworth the possessions of the Brontës are preserved in their original setting. Here is the trunk which Charlotte took to Belgium with her and the

M. Heger's granddaughter visits Haworth



This year marks the centenary of the publication of Charlotte Brontë's novel, "Villette." The novel described Charlotte's experiences at M. Heger's school in Brussels, and yesterday Mme. Lucien Beckers, granddaughter of M. Heger, visited the Brontë Parsonage Museum at Haworth. This Yorkshire Post picture shows Dr. Phyllis Bentley (left) and M. and Mme. Beckers inspecting a special centenary display of relics associated with "Villette." (See This World of Ours on

Pay grievance
stops work in





All Bronte Adaptations

[01] All Bronte Adaptations [50 Titles]

<https://www.imdb.com/list/ls032734457/>

[02] EVERY Brontë adaptation [24 Titles]

<https://www.imdb.com/list/ls000192799/>

[03] The Brontës on Film, Television and in Fiction
[Wuthering Heights]

<https://www.annebronte.org/2017/09/17/the-brontes-on-film-television-and-in-fiction/>

[04] Brontë Film Adaptations [10 items]

<https://arapahoelibraries.bibliocommons.com/v2/list/display/682768697/1054555297>

[05] Three of the Greatest Jane Eyre Adaptations

<https://www.annebronte.org/2020/08/02/three-of-the-greatest-adaptations-of-jane-eyre/>

[06] 15 Best Jane Eyre Film Adaptations, Ranked

<https://screenrant.com/best-jane-eyre-film-adaptations-ranked/>

[07] Movies Based on the Bronte Novels

<https://www.listchallenges.com/movies-based-on-the-bronte-novels>

30 of the Best Books About the Brontës

This post features a list of 30 books about the Brontës which have been particularly useful or enlightening during my research on the family over the years. To qualify the books simply had to be entirely about the Brontës (there is one exception which you can read about below) and I've included several fictional texts on the basis that they do provide information about the siblings' early writings and lives. If you're serious about the Brontës you could do worse than investing in a few of these titles. Sadly, some of these texts are now out of print, but can easily be purchased through second-hand booksellers.

The Brontës (1994) by Juliet Barker. The definitive Brontë biography contains information on just about every aspect of their lives. To put it bluntly, you can't know the Brontës without this book, and you'd be a fool not to invest in it.

The Brontës: A Life in Letters (1997) edited by Juliet Barker. A selection of letters written by and to the Brontës. It's the Brontës in their own words, stripped of all the mythology that surrounds the family to this day. An honourable mention must go to **Selected Letters** edited by Margaret Smith.

In Search of Anne Brontë (2016) by Nick Holland. This brilliant biography of the youngest sibling presents the strength and courage of Anne and also sheds light on her relationship with Charlotte. It's incredibly detailed, a joy to read due to Holland's balance between knowledge of and passion for his subject, and more importantly, it brings Anne out of the shadows of her sisters.

The Brontë Cabinet: Three Lives in Nine Objects (2015) by Deborah Lutz. This is a fascinating little book; a biography of the Brontës that doesn't feel like one (in a good way). Lutz traces the history of the family through some of the objects they owned and created. It's also got a fantastic chapter on the Brontë juvenilia, beginning with their famous tiny books.

Patrick Brontë: Father of Genius (2008) by Dudley Green. An incredibly detailed biography of the remarkable father of the Brontës covering everything from his Irish origins to his death in Haworth. A more sympathetic portrayal than that which features in older biographies of the family; this book rights a few wrongs regarding Patrick's true nature.

The Infernal World of Branwell Brontë (1960) by Daphne Du Maurier. My biggest issue with this book is that it reads more like a novel than a biography. Although this a brilliant book written by a brilliant author, it is written by one best known for fiction, and consequently, it contributes greatly to the Brontë myth that persists even in the 21st century. It's still unique in the sense that it's focused on Branwell rather than his sisters, but although it's full of information, it casts Branwell into the shadows rather than allowing him to step out of those of his sisters. Still, anyone curious about the Brontë brother would be unwise to give this a miss when piecing together the bigger picture of the Brontë family.

Mansions in the Sky: The Rise and Fall of Branwell Brontë (2017) by Ann Dinsdale and Simon Armitage. This is actually the exhibition catalogue from the Brontë Parsonage's celebration of Branwell's bicentenary. It makes the list due to its brief but more honest depiction of Branwell. Yes, he was incredibly troubled, but he was also incredibly talented, something which really shines through in this more balanced representation of the Brontë brother. Let's hope this is the way forward. It also features several new poems by Armitage that channel the spirit of Branwell and were inspired by his life and work.

Charlotte Brontë: The Evolution of Genius (1967) by Winifred Gérin. This prize-winning biography is a good one for those interested in Charlotte's early fiction as renowned Brontë scholar Gérin explores the development of Charlotte's talents over the years and the influences on her work.

Emily Brontë: A Biography (1971) by Winifred Gérin. It's still remarkably difficult to find decent biographies of the most mysterious Brontë, but this one still holds up. The parts that interested me the most were the parts detailing Emily's own

fantasy world of Gondal, a creation just as enigmatic as the author herself. I must note that Gérin wrote biographies on all four surviving Brontë siblings, which are all worth a read, however, I didn't want to clutter the list up with too many entries from one author where I could help it.

The Life of Charlotte Brontë (1857) by Elizabeth Gaskell. This biography was authorised by Patrick Brontë himself shortly after Charlotte's death. Anyone reading and writing about the Brontës can't ignore the existence of this work, but it has always frustrated me slightly because Gaskell does not let facts get in the way of a good story, spawning the Brontë mythology that continues to this day.

Charlotte Brontë's World of Death (1979) by Robert Keefe. This text examines how Charlotte's writing is a creative response to the deaths of close family members in her childhood. Keefe traces Charlotte's preoccupation with issues of death, loss, and separation from her juvenilia through to her adult novels, and how her relationship with these issues matures over the years.

Charlotte Brontë: The Self Conceived (1976) by Helen Moglen. Moglen's biography explores Charlotte's notion of selfhood, and how facts and fiction intertwine to represent this self on the page. Moglen examines Charlotte's sense of duality and the connection between literature and the life of the author and traces the development of her psyche from the juvenilia to her later novels.

The Brontës in Brussels (2014) by Helen MacEwan. An account of Charlotte and Emily's time spent in Brussels from 1842-43, this book retraces the footsteps of the sisters using words, photographs, and illustrations. There is also plenty of information on the object of Charlotte's affection, teacher Constantin Héger, who had a profound effect on her. Information on life after Brussels can also be found in addition to plot summaries of Charlotte's *The Professor* and *Villette*, novels set in Brussels.

The Oxford Companion to the Brontës (2003) by Margaret Smith and Christine Alexander. An A-Z of everything Brontë

related, this book looks at everything from characters and settings in their works to the family's reputation and the personal lives of the individual family members. That doesn't do it justice. Like Barker's *The Brontës*, it's just full of information on just about everything.

Everyman's Companion to the Brontës (1982) by Barbara and Gareth Lloyd Evans. Whilst considerably shorter than its Oxford cousin, this one gets the nod over the *Cambridge Companion* due to its incredible detail on the Brontë juvenilia, featuring glossaries on both Glass Town/Angria and Gondal, in addition to a very useful chronology of Glass Town events. I wish I'd discovered this whilst writing my MA dissertation a couple of years ago. It really would have helped to sort the saga's events out in my mind. It's always worth double-checking facts about the Brontë juvenilia in older texts such as this due to the discovery of lost manuscripts which have the potential to alter timelines and developing plot lines.

Charlotte Brontë and Victorian Psychology (1996) by Sally Shuttleworth. This one is great for students and academics as it places Charlotte's work firmly within the Victorian era and the debates and issues of the day, covering social, economic, and psychological discourse. It may seem a strange idea, but it's only when you read this text that you realise the how common the tendency to analyse Charlotte's work from a more modern perspective really is. Unsurprisingly there are some interesting ideas about Charlotte's juvenilia to be found in here, in addition to ideas about the self and power, but the greater part of the material explores Charlotte's adult novels.

Charlotte Brontë and the Storyteller's Audience (1992) by Carol Bock. This one differs from most other biographies by suggesting that Charlotte's writing was not unconsciously confessional and examining the role of the reader/audience in her storytelling. Bock enables the reader to understand Charlotte's ability as a narrative artist, and her understanding of storytelling, beginning with her childhood in Haworth and exploring her relationship with her siblings, who were of course the first witnesses to Charlotte's storytelling.

The Brontës at Haworth (2016) by Ann Dinsdale. Few people know the Brontës as well as the current curator of the Brontë Parsonage Museum, Ann Dinsdale. This book is packed full of information about all aspects of the Brontës' lives in addition to beautiful colour photographs of items relating to their lives and works. Each family member gets a chapter and the background of the family is explored in addition to the sisters' works and legacy.

The Art of the Brontës (1995) by Christine Alexander and Jane Sellars. This is an absolute gem of a book. It contains what its title suggests, providing not only photographs of just about every single work of art produced by the siblings, but also detailed information about their origins, composition, and provenance over the years. Unfortunately, it's out of print and still on the pricey side if you can track it down, but it's well worth every penny you'll pay for it.

Celebrating Charlotte Brontë: Transforming Life into Literature in *Jane Eyre* (2016) by Christine Alexander and Sara L. Pearson. Published to mark the bicentenary of Charlotte, this wonderful book explores Brontë's transformation of life into literature, and the depiction of her own experience on the page in *Jane Eyre*. If it sounds dull and a bit like other pieces on Charlotte's masterpiece, it isn't; this book is simply unlike any other book about the Brontës. Alexander and Pearson provide information, detailed commentaries, photographs of items from Charlotte's life, and even recipes. It's only when reading this that you realise just how long *Jane Eyre* was in the making despite the fact it took Charlotte just months to actually pen it. I didn't think I could love *Jane Eyre* (and Mr Rochester) anymore until this book came along and made me appreciate it on a whole new level.

The Brontës' Web of Childhood (1941) by Fannie Ratchford. The first critical study of the Brontë juvenilia was written by a pioneer in Brontë and juvenilia studies. This is included due to the biographical information on the siblings' early lives rather than the actual content itself. If the Brontës left behind a legacy, then so did Ratchford when she did what others (including Elizabeth Gaskell) failed to do by championing the importance of

these early works of four precocious children. Although some factual information needs double-checking due to the age of the text, if you're serious about the Brontë juvenilia, you need to read this.

Five Novelettes (1971) by Winifred Gérin. Again, this one is included due to the detailed background information provided by the author rather than the content. The book consists of five of Charlotte's Angrian novelettes (a term coined by Brontë herself in a letter) from the later part of her literary saga, but the information Gérin provides is useful to any serious students of the Brontë juvenilia. Like Ratchford's text, take care to double-check facts including dates of composition etc., and be careful when discussing the novelettes as some have been edited and consequently are very different to the versions found in modern day anthologies of the juvenilia such as the entry below.

Tales of Angria, Glass Town, and Gondal (2010) edited by Christine Alexander. A modern anthology of works by all four surviving siblings in which Alexander provides detailed and up-to-date information on the history of the saga and the nature of juvenilia in her introduction.

The Works of Branwell Brontë (reprinted 2016) edited by Victor Neufeldt. There are several volumes of works edited by Neufeldt but I'm including them under one entry as they share a title. Neufeldt provides unbiased information on Branwell's life, creativity, and legacy in introductions that build up a mini but detailed biography of the Brontë brother. It's invaluable for those seeking the truth about Branwell's literary efforts.

The Child Writer from Austen to Woolf (2005) edited by Christine Alexander and Juliet McMaster. Although this is an anthology of essays on juvenilia and juvenilia studies, there are several chapters devoted to the Brontës' early fiction, their origins, and literary apprenticeship. If you're not interested in their Glass Town/Angrian/Gondal works then this isn't for you. It was a lifeline for me when writing my MA dissertation on Charlotte's early works several years ago and if your interest has been sparked by my blog, I highly recommended it.

The Early Writings of Charlotte Brontë (1983) by Christine Alexander. This book does what it says on the cover, and it's a fascinating and helpful read despite its age. It's the first comprehensive study of Charlotte's early fiction which traces the history of Glass Town, and the rise and fall of Angria. Alexander looks at Charlotte's influences both within and without the family, her collaboration with Branwell, and the development of her writing style over the years. It features Charlotte's artwork and depictions of her beloved characters in addition to helpful notes and a list of characters. Again, as the text is a good few decades old, double-check any facts, but this still holds up as one of the best sources of information on the Brontë juvenilia. It's surprisingly easy to read for the more casual reader intrigued by characters such as Zamorna, Charles Wellesley, and Mina Laury, but without the time to wade through the saga itself. You really should do it one day though.

The Glass Town Game (2017) by Catherynne M. Valente. A 2017 children's book by an American author arguably best known for fantasy and science fiction may seem like a strange choice but the book is based on the childhood games played by the siblings and is largely set in Glass Town, their fantasy world. Whilst there is a lot of new material created specifically for this book, it has enough information on the Brontës' early works and characters to warrant its inclusion on this list. You really can learn a lot from it.

The Last Brontë: The Intimate Memoir of Arthur Bell Nicholls (2017) by S.R. Whitehead. This is an interesting entry due to its focus on Charlotte's husband rather than the Brontës themselves. However, as the title suggests, Nicholls was also a Brontë and the one who lived to endure the deaths of Branwell, Emily, Anne, Charlotte, his unborn child, and finally, Patrick. Nicholls doesn't get much attention from biographers, and although this is fiction, it's a forcible reminder of his suffering. In short, Whitehead humanises a man most (including myself) have written off as being cold, distant, and uncaring.

Worlds of Ink and Shadow: A Novel of the Brontës (2016) by Lena Coakley. I stumbled upon this one completely by accident, and I'm so glad I did. Although it's historical fantasy

fiction, it features enough information not only about the content of the Brontë juvenilia but life at Haworth that it warrants a place on this list. Like *The Glass Town Game* it is based on the early fiction of the Brontës and explores their desire to leave behind the real world in favour of Veropolis and Gondal, and the consequences they face for doing so.

The Twelve and the Genii (1962) by Pauline Clarke. The final entry is a children's novel about the twelve toy soldiers given to Branwell Brontë in 1826 by his father, an event which sparked the Glass Town saga into life. Clarke's novel earns its place for being an early example of Brontë inspired fiction, and for introducing non-academic readers to the Brontë juvenilia. It also gets points for using character names in the title (all hail the four Chief Genii: Talli, Branni, Emmi, and Anni).

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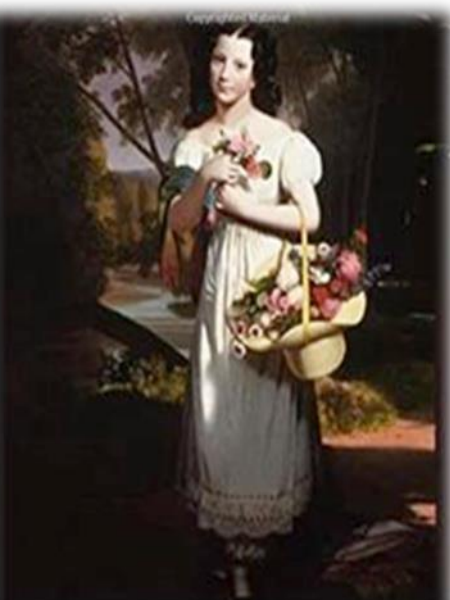
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The Original 1847 Edition With Complete Illustrations
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